



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

ANDOVER-HARVARD LIBRARY

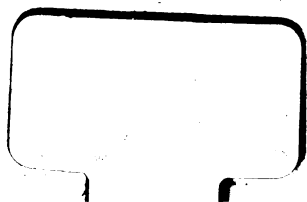


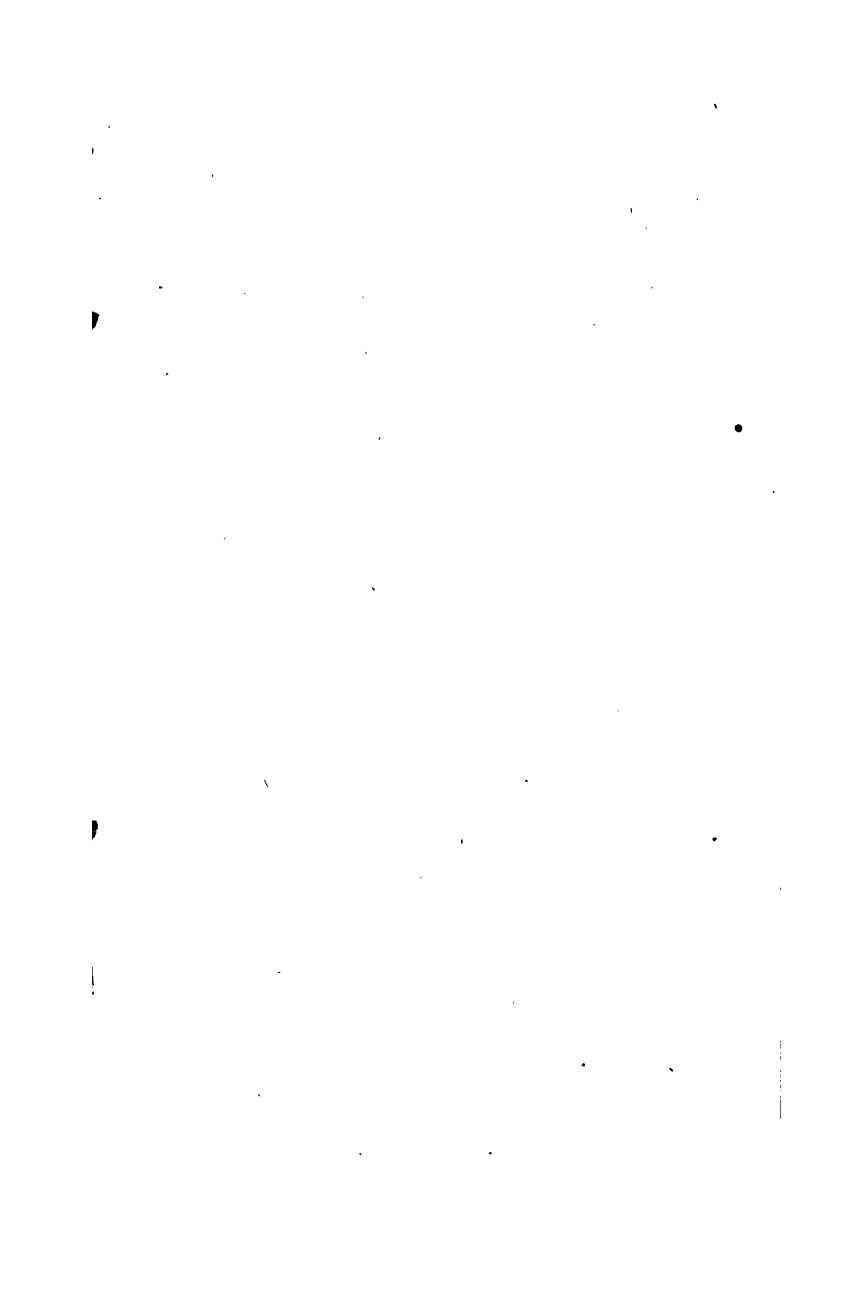
AH 5FB4 J

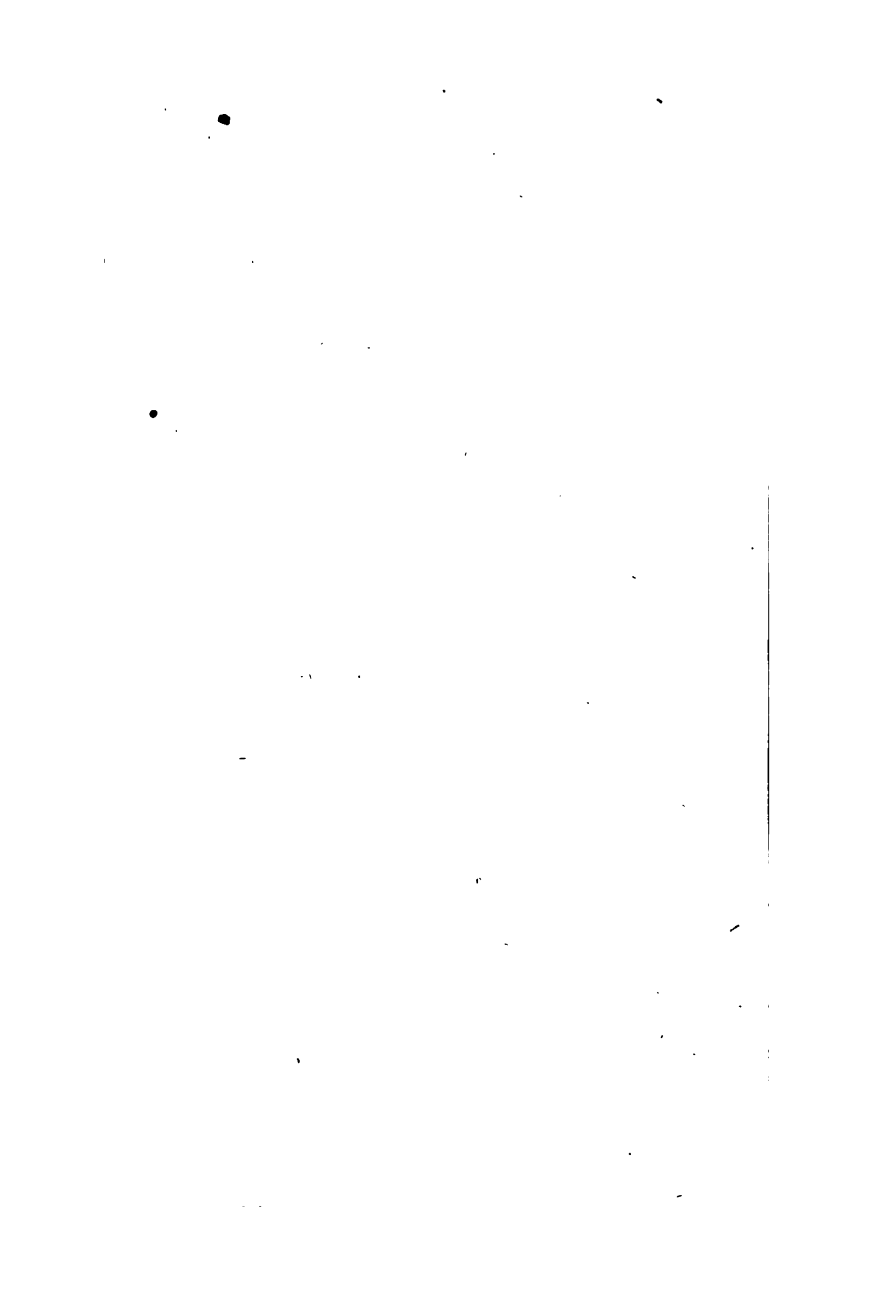
HARVARD DIVINITY SCHOOL
ANDOVER-HARVARD THEOLOGICAL
LIBRARY



From the collection
of the
UNIVERSALIST HISTORICAL
SOCIETY







ENDLESS PUNISHMENT;

ITS

ORIGIN AND GROUNDS

EXAMINED;

WITH OTHER DISCOURSES.

BY T. J. SAWYER.

Minister of the Orchard street (Universalist) Church, New York.

NEW-YORK:

C. L. STICKNEY, 140 FULTON STREET,

Second Floor.

.....

1845.

BT
837
S39

Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1845,
BY C. L. STICKNEY,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the Southern Dis-
trict of New York.

PREFACE.

The following pages were written to be published and are published in the hope that they may be read. It would therefore be quite out of place to offer an apology for the errors and imperfections they may very probably contain.

The subjects here treated I cannot but think important, and to deserve much greater attention than they usually receive. Of the doctrine of Endless Punishment it may be thought that I have spoken harshly; but I ask my reader to reflect on the doctrine a moment, on its terrible character, on what it implies of man and ascribes to God, the Father of all, and then tell me in candor if I have spoken of it, or if it be possible for any one to speak of it, in terms of condemnation too severe. For the honest believers in this horrible dogma I would ever entertain a due respect, but the doctrine itself I can neither respect, nor speak of in any other language than that of undisguised abhorrence and detestation. The ingenuity of men and devils can invent nothing worse. It is the foulest libel ever uttered upon the divine character and government, a disgrace to the church which fosters it, and a curse to all over whom it exerts an influence. No system of theology which embraces it can be otherwise than corrupt and corrupting, inasmuch as it teaches principles subversive of the very spirit of the gospel, and inconsistent with the whole revealed character of God.

But I will not argue the subject here; I merely commend this little book to such as may be interested in its perusal; for the rest, I would neither court their favor, nor deprecate their displeasure.

THE AUTHOR.

New York, 1845.

TO HIS FRIEND AND FELLOW LABORER IN THE GOSPEL,

REV. HOSEA BALLOU, 2d,

Is this little volume respectfully inscribed, as a slight token of long
cherished affection and esteem, by

THE AUTHOR.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
Origin of the Doctrine of Endless Punishment,	7
The Contrast ; or more for us than against us,	29
Origin of Sin,	68
The Birth of Christ.	103
Examination of the Grounds of the Doctrine of Endless Punishment,	121
Chapter I. Of Hell,	123
Chapter II. Of Hell's Horrors,	127
PUNISHMENTS OF SENSE.	
Sec. 1 Brief Description,	130
" 2 Hell Fire,	133
" 3 Pains suffered by the sense of sight,	139
" 4 " " " hearing,	141
" 5 " " " smell,	142
" 6 " " " taste,	143
" 7 Accessory pains and aggravations,	145
PUNISHMENTS OF LOSS.	
Sec. 8 The loss of God,	153
" 9 " " Heaven,	155
" 10 Pains arising from a guilty conscience,	156
" 11 " " malevolent passions,	159
" 12 " " despair,	162
" 13 " " fear,	163
Hell torments inflicted immediately by God,	165
" " severe as possible,	165
" " are absolutely endless,	165
Notions of eternity,	167
The damned will pray to be annihilated, but refused,	170

Chapter III.	Of the number of the damned	176
Chapter IV.	Of belief in Endless Punishment	188
Chapter V.	Of the Grounds of Endless Punishment	201
Sec. 1	Sin infinite	201
2	Infinite punishment the counterpart of infinite rewards	216
3	God has duly forewarned the sinner	219
4	No repentance in the future state	221
5	Endless punishment the natural consequence of sin	224
6	The damned incurably wicked	227
7	God foresees that the wicked would sin forever	229
8	Endless punishment purely vindictive	232
9	" " inflicted by way of example	233
10	" " analogous to the inflictions of natural and civil law	241
11	Sinners will never cease to sin	243
12	Convicted sinners feel that they deserve endless punishment	246
13	We know not why endless punishment is inflicted	248
14	Endless punishment threatened but God is not obliged to inflict it	249
	Conclusion	251

ORIGIN
OF THE DOCTRINE OF
ENDLESS PUNISHMENT.

Can the rush grow up without mire? Can the flag grow
without water? Job viii. 11.

For the last half century or more, as is well known, an active controversy has been going on in this country, and to some extent in the most enlightened parts of Europe also, in relation to the final destiny of the human race, or rather, perhaps I should say, in relation to the destiny of an important portion of the race. For it is agreed on all sides in Christendom, that the virtuous, the good in the christian sense of the term—those who have lived in accordance with the requirements of our holy religion, and died in possession of its faith and hopes—shall in the world to come be received to heaven and exalted to a state of felicity beyond all that our poor hearts are here able even to conceive. But this favored class embraces, unfortunately, but a small portion even of the christian world; for we behold on every hand unbelief

and crime, and a too obvious want of the spirit of Christ and his gospel. It would, of course, be in vain, to attempt any accurate estimate of the relative proportion of saints and sinners, of true christian believers and of unbelievers or false believers in Christendom. But it would be a liberal estimate which should give them as one to three ; one saint to three sinners ! Perhaps one to nine would be a nearer approximation to the truth.

Beyond the sphere of Christendom, which as yet embraces but about one quarter of the habitable earth, all is of course darkness and death.—There is no gospel, no Savior, no salvation. For who can expect to find christian faith where christianity itself is unknown ? Who will look for christian virtues where the spirit of Christ has never been diffused ?

You will readily perceive, then, that the controversy to which I allude, is by no means one of idle speculation, as some would have us believe. It concerns the everlasting weal or wo of far the larger portion of mankind ; it concerns not merely indifferent persons—the Hottentots of Africa or the Tartars of Asia—but our own fellow citizens, our neighbors, our friends, and our kindred. It concerns our own households, our wives, our children—those whom we love as we love our own life. It concerns ourselves, if in no other way, at least in the same proportion as we are christians, and feel interested in the welfare of those whom it

has pleased God to make in the same image, endow with the same faculties, and finally design alike for an immortal existence beyond the grave.

If this be a question of idle curiosity, of refined speculation, that lies beyond the sphere of human inquiry and duty, what question, let me ask, is or can be of deep, permanent and soul-absorbing interest? I frankly confess that I know of none that should appeal to men's intellects or hearts with a more commanding power.

Nor can I persuade myself that this great question, which springs up so spontaneously in every good mind, and demands an answer, is left unsolved, as some would have us think, in the Oracles of divine Truth. I can not believe that when God revealed himself to the world as the universal Father, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel of Jesus Christ—I can not believe, I repeat, that—he closed the fountain of eternal truth and consolation over a subject like this: a subject which, he foresaw, would agitate the great heart of humanity in its seasons of deepest thought; and the soul of the mourner in the night watches, when it yearns over lost affection and goes with its speechless agony to the very grave, that hides what it loved best on earth, from the outward eye for ever.

In the domain of revelation, this question has been discussed, on the part of our opposers, with great learning and zeal. They have brought to

the discussion much research and the fruits of pains-taking study. They have summoned all the zeal which interest in a dogma, rendered venerable in their eyes by antiquity, could impart ; and have heightened it, by persuading themselves that in assailing our faith they were virtually rallying for their own, for the defence of ancient standards, and for repelling what must prove most dangerous to man's welfare here, and his everlasting happiness hereafter. They have come to the struggle, as we all know, in some respects, well prepared, and have too often met but raw and undisciplined combatants. And yet what has been the result ? Have their learning and zeal enabled them to gain the victory ? Have they left the field in triumph ? They can not persuade themselves that it is so. Crude as many of our theories have been, and unskilled in all the higher branches of criticism and exegesis, as most of our friends confessedly were, they have still sustained the onset manfully, and have given full proof, if not of their own prowess, at least of the soundness of their cause, and the mightiness of truth, which no tact, no learning, no talent can overcome.

But let us not deceive ourselves. These battles, my friends, are all to be fought over again. The time is coming, when in the field of exegesis, of scripture interpretation, we are to meet our opposers once more, and meet them, I trust, on equal

ground, even handed, with equal learning and equal research.

But there are other considerations which do not fall within the range of scriptural argument, and which are still urged with much earnestness in favor of the popular dogma of endless punishment. And among these there is one, which has perhaps been less attended to by us than most others, and which yet deserves examination at our hands. For it is not only the *real*, but the *apparent*, with which we have to do. There are many fallacies which are so ingeniously wrought up and cunningly presented, that they avail with the multitude as effectually as if grounded on eternal truth.

"Can the rush grow up without mire? Can the flag grow without water?" In other words, can any consequence exist, any phenomenon present itself, without a *cause*? Thus asks the advocate of endless misery; and then proceeds to state his case in somewhat the following manner:

The doctrine of endless misery, says he, exists, and as a *fact* must be accounted for. It not only exists now, but it has existed time out of mind. Its history can, perhaps, scarcely be traced to its origin; for it runs back into the dusk of the highest antiquity, and is lost amid its impenetrable shades. It has not only existed for centuries and centuries, from unrecorded time, but it has been almost universal among men. "The doctrine of

a hell for the wicked," says a late erudite writer, "is one of the most ancient and at the same time the most universal that has ever been believed among mankind." We find traces of it, we are told, in almost all ages and countries. We meet these traces, it is said, in the fragments of Egyptian lore, that have outlived the ravages of time, and come down defaced and broken, to the present day. In the popular faith of ancient Greece and Rome this doctrine held a prominent place. Throughout almost the whole of the populous countries of Asia, this doctrine is said to be publicly recognized. And if we turn to the New World, the hordes of savages who traversed its vast wildernesses of old, all acknowledged this great moral dogma ; and their children, who are now fading away towards the setting sun, still do the same. It is taught, say its advocates, in the temple of Juggernaut—a very suitable place, let me remark, for such a doctrine to be taught. It is proclaimed in the language of heathen oracles—a very proper language, I add, in which to proclaim it. It is believed on the shores of the Amazon and the Ganges ; it is read in the Koran ; it is received by the children of Abraham ; it is preached by the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth.—Go where you will, north, south, east, west, there you will find this great doctrine universally spread abroad ; almost universally believed !

It is in this manner we find the fact stated by

advocates of the doctrine in question. Now what, they ask, is the *cause* of this fact? Whence came this doctrine, so widely spread, so generally believed? "Whence came it? This is the great and difficult problem for those to solve who assert that it is contrary to the Scriptures, the reason and the feelings. Whence came it---we repeat the question---whence came it in opposition to these mighty opposing influences. Men are not fond of what is irrational for its own sake; they certainly do not love their own misery. Whence came this *tregeron mythos*, the awful fears of Hades, Tartarus and Gehenna? Why, (if the creed of the Universalist be true) have men thus cruelly tortured themselves for nought? Why have they indulged in such terrific inventions of fancy? Why have they passed a sentence so severe on their own depravity?"* Is this universal faith the voice of revelation? Or is it the voice of a wounded conscience? Is it from heaven or of men? For if it be from heaven, then should all believe it; and those who oppose it are found fighting against God. If it be the dictate of reason, or the voice of conscience, then it is true; and no less so perhaps than though it were revealed in the Scriptures.

It is obvious that great force is supposed to lie somewhere in this argument, but it is difficult to

* Taylor Lewis, Esq., Professor of Greek in the University of N. York. See Article III. Bib. Repository, July, 1843.

say exactly where. It is certain the *antiquity* of the doctrine is no decisive proof of its *truth*; for antiquity is well known to have indulged in many gross errors. Then, as to what is called its *universality*: it may, and perhaps must, be admitted that whatever opinion, or even tendency, we observe to be *universal* and *invariable* among men, that is, the same in all ages and all countries, must have a ground in the very constitution of human nature. That there are some such uniform and permanent dispositions or characteristics of men, is easily shown. Man is, for instance, a *social* being. Now this is a universal and invariable fact. You can point me to no age, to no country, indeed to no individual of our race, to whom society is not naturally agreeable. And should the proposition be laid down that man is a social being, that he loves society and thinks it necessary or desirable to his happiness, the facts just stated would furnish the most conclusive proof of it. In like manner, it may be said that man is a *religious* being. He has reared his temples and altars in every land, and by sacrifice and prayer, has sought unto some superior power. So he desires happiness, and thirsts after immortality. Every where and at all times, are these impulses of his nature bursting forth.

Now whatever opinion or feeling we observe to be universally and invariably entertained, must be grounded in our common nature, and hence in

a measure true; and, consequently, if it can be shown that the doctrine of endless misery is thus universal and invariable, it will follow, of course, that it is consonant with our nature, and is the dictate of human reason. For in that case it becomes a part and parcel of our intellectual and moral being, and is always evolved in its proper development.

But can all this be affirmed of the doctrine in question? The most that its advocates assume is that it is and has been very general, insomuch that it may be regarded as the *common* sentiment of mankind. It is said to be "one of the most ancient and at the same time the most universal" doctrines ever known. And hence it seems to be concluded that it must be true. But neither great antiquity, nor commonness, nor the two united, are able to establish the truth of any doctrine, nor even its probability. Because there are many opinions which are both very ancient and very general, which yet are not only untrue, but also contradicted by the dictates of enlightened reason or expressly denied by the voice of revelation.

What, for instance, has been more common or general in the world than *polytheism* and *idolatry*. If we except the single nation of the Jews, the whole world, before the coming of Christ, were polytheists and idolaters. The ancient Egyptians had a vast multitude of gods—oxen, crocodiles, birds, the constellations and other heavenly bod-

ies. The Greeks and Romans had their thousands and thousands of deities. The Hindoos and Chinese had their various divinities. Some men worshipped the sun and moon, some the elements, some deified their fellow creatures, some worshipped stocks and stones. Indeed almost every thing in the universe became to some nation or individual an object of adoration, and received the homage that is due to the One living and true God alone.

And how has it been since the time of Christ, and how is it now? Large portions of the world are involved in heathenism and idolatry to this day, and if the opinion of many Protestants may be believed, one half of Christendom is even now no better. Polytheism and idolatry are and have been common and general then; as much so as the belief in endless punishment. They are as ancient as this doctrine and as general. Are they therefore true? The evidence in favor of these opinions is as various and as strong as that produced by the argument before us in favor of endless misery.

Let us suppose for a moment, that a missionary from some pagan land should visit the United States, and endeavor to persuade christians to the worship of idols, and the belief in a multitude of gods. Suppose that with a slight change of phraseology, he should introduce the argument we are now considering, and should say—The worship of

idols and the belief in many gods is very common and general. Scarcely any opinion or practice is more universal. It is seen under the equator and towards the poles. It is enjoined in heathen oracles. We see it in the temple of Juggernaut and on the shores of the Ganges. We find it in Africa and in Asia, in the wilds of America, and the isles of the ocean. Now I ask, whence came this general belief? Where did our fathers learn it? There is no opinion more ancient or universal. It must have had some origin, and I ask you who deny its truth to tell me what that origin is. Is it the voice of conscience, or the dictate of reason, or a revelation from the gods? For one of these it must be, and be it which it may, it is undoubtedly true.

What reception, think you, such an argument would meet with among enlightened christians? Would they be convinced by it, and renounce christianity? Would they not rather smile and reply—If all the world were polytheists and idolaters, and were we the first of the human race to dissent from those common follies, we must abjure them forever. For though to others there are “lords many and gods many, yet to us there is but one God, even the Father, and but one Lord, Jesus Christ.” And though all men worshipped stocks and stones “graved by art and man’s device,” yet we must worship the living and true God, who made heaven and earth, and all things,

and in whom we live and move and have our being.

Perhaps I shall be told that idolatry and polytheism, are only a perversion of the true religion—a kind of monstrous birth, showing the results of ignorance under the instinctive impulses of man's religious nature. This I readily admit. But is not the doctrine of endless punishment in like manner to be regarded as a perversion of the truth, the effect of human ignorance operating on the universal conviction that sin, or wrong doing is deserving of punishment, of an adequate punishment, under the righteous administration of a just God. The cases are in this respect parallel, and I hazard nothing in asserting that idolatry and polytheism are as common in the world at this moment, as is the doctrine of endless misery ; and that the former are in fact no greater a perversion of truth than the latter.

It may be observed as a general, perhaps a universal fact, that some truth, or something very like truth, lies at the basis of every error ; it mingles with it, and is made to contribute something of form and permanency to it. Take from error every thing that is true or allied to truth, and you despoil it of whatever could recommend it to the world. You may have it perhaps in appearance quite what it was before, but the soul, the animating principle is gone. Like the ashes of an organized body sometimes presented to our view,

it may seem perfect, but it crumbles under the slightest touch, and even a breath of air annihilates it in a moment. It is thus idolatry itself has its ground in human nature, in that which makes us religious beings, and in the fact that there is a God whom we should worship and adore. Take away these truths, deprive man of his religious nature, and we see idolatry no more.

It is so with the doctrine of endless punishment. It is a great fact that there is a moral governor over the world, under whose all-perfect administration no single sin can pass undetected or unpunished. It is also a fact that every sinner in the world feels a consciousness of guilt deep within his soul; feels that he is blame-worthy and the proper subject of punishment. Destroy this consciousness, and the doctrine of endless misery exists no longer. But this doctrine is not necessarily true because God is a moral governor and we are conscious of deserving punishment.

But let me take another illustration. There is, as we all know, scarcely any opinion more prevalent in the world than that which relates to witches, wizards, spectres, hobgoblins, fairies, &c. &c. Some of them are believed in, not only in distant and heathen lands, but even enlightened Europe still clings with the greatest tenacity to its faith in them, and there are thousands and thousands in our own country, and indeed in this very city, who believe implicitly in the existence of ghosts,

in omens, dreams and fortune-telling. How many thousands there are around us who entertain the greatest confidence in lucky and unlucky days ; and who would not start on a journey or commence any considerable work on Friday upon no consideration whatever.

Now a faith in these things has not been confined to a few people, but has spread over the whole earth. We find it in every age and every country ; nor has Christianity, with all the lights of science, as yet been able to root out these vulgar superstitions from the public mind. But are these things true ? On the contrary must they not be regarded as eminently false ?

Whence then did they spring. They must have had an origin ; and the man who denies or doubts them, is as much obliged to explain their origin, as we are to explain that of endless punishment. But every one acquainted with the subject knows how extremely difficult it is fully to account for them, or trace them to their origin ; their history loses itself in the mists and darkness of ancient times. What then ? Must we on that account insist that they are true in fact, and perfectly consonant with human nature, and therefore a faith in them is the product of reason, or a part of a special but long-lost revelation from God ?

Now I maintain that the faith in ghosts and witches and goblins is as common, as general, as is the faith in endless misery, and ever has been.

And at the present moment even, it is probable there are as many believers in the former as the latter doctrine; and the believers in endless misery are as rapidly decreasing, in this country at least, as are those in witches, ghosts and goblins.

From these instances, to introduce no more, it is seen that the fact of a faith in any thing being general or commonly received furnishes no evidence of its truth, and we cannot therefore reason with the slightest safety from one to the other.

That it is difficult, and perhaps impossible to trace the doctrine of endless misery back to its source, I am quite willing to acknowledge; for like many other errors and superstitions, *idolatry*, *witchcraft* and the like, it undoubtedly had a pretty early origin, and an origin, too, which lies back, perhaps I may say, beyond the pale of all profane, and entirely without the sphere of sacred history. But whenever it arose, or wherever, and for what purpose soever it was called into existence, one fact is clear and most significant; and that is, that *it originally appeared in the heathen world*, and took its place with the grand system of falsehood and deception which so long held its sway over the great mass of mankind. This is a fact beyond all doubt or controversy. The doctrine of endless misery is no doctrine of Old Testament Revelation. It can boast no divine origin. Bishop Warburton tells us that even the Greek writers called future punishment *for-*

eign, by which they meant Egyptian, and he says moreover that endless punishments were added to keep perverse and ungovernable dispositions in subjection. In this he is fully supported by ancient writers. Polybius, for instance, an ancient Greek historian, tells us plainly that "since the multitude is ever fickle and capricious, full of lawless passions and irrational and violent resentments, there is no way left to keep them in order, but by the terrors of future punishment and all the pompous circumstance that attends such kind of fiction. On which account, the ancients acted, in my opinion, with great judgment and penetration, when they contrived to bring in those notions of the gods and a future state into the popular belief." Strabo, another Greek writer, speaks to the same purpose. "It is impossible, he says, to govern women, and the gross body of the people, and to keep them pious, holy and virtuous, by the precepts of philosophy: This can only be done by the fear of the gods, which is raised and supported by ancient fictions and modern prodigies." He tells us further that the "apparatus of the ancient mythologies," was "an engine which the Legislators employed as bugbears to strike a terror into the childish imagination of the multitude."

Here it may be observed these authors speak of the doctrine of endless punishment, and the whole heathen system with which it stands con-

nected as a device of legislators, designed to make the rabble more governable and therefore better subjects. And it is a curious and not uninteresting fact that these authors also speak of this punishment as something in which they had not the least faith, as something unreal and imaginary—what they called a fiction, a contrivance of the legislators, and its terrors mere bugbears to keep the multitude in order. But still they regarded it as a most excellent device, and one that could hardly be dispensed with, especially for “women and the gross body of the people.” Some of the infidels of England during the last century, adopted the same view and denounced all who ventured to call in question the doctrine of endless torments; not because they believed it themselves! by no means; but simply because they thought it so useful to the state!

I confess, I have my fears that many of the stoutest advocates of that doctrine at the present day profess and preach it on no better grounds. They think it useful to make men religious, and therefore maintain it. But those well acquainted with the history of the ancient heathen world, may well entertain some doubts of the efficacy of this prescription, for it never carried the heathen to any great height of religion or virtue.

It is a fact, then, that the doctrine in question had its origin in the heathen world, and the heathen world enjoyed the exclusive benefits of it for

several ages before the Jews, God's favored people, had the slightest knowledge of it. This is virtually conceded by many most eminent theologians, as Dr. Jahn, Dr. Campbell, Bp. Warburton, Dr. Paley, etc. etc. Bp. Warburton says expressly that "in the Jewish republic both rewards and punishments promised by Heaven were temporal only. . . . In no place in the Mosaic Institutes is there the least mention, or any intelligible hint of the rewards and punishments of another life." Dr. Paley in like manner says, "This dispensation dealt in temporal rewards and punishments," and that "the blessings and curses" promised by Moses, "consisted altogether of worldly benefits and worldly punishments." Dr. Campbell and Dr. Jahn both assert that the Old Testament does not disclose a state of punishment beyond the grave. This point is a settled one. The Old Testament knows nothing even of *future* punishment; how much less then of a punishment that is **ENDLESS**?

Though, therefore, it is difficult to find the origin of the doctrine of endless misery, we can easily ascertain two most important facts in relation to it. The first is, that it is not a doctrine of divine revelation; and the second, that it took its rise in the darkness and ignorance of heathenism. And the real difficulty to be explained seems to me to be, not how the doctrine of endless torments came to prevail among the heathen, but how, if it

be true, they happened to be so highly blessed, while God's own peculiar people, the only people on earth favored with a *revelation*, were left in so profound ignorance of it ! This is a point which has never yet been explained, and perhaps it is quite in vain to ask an explanation. Still I would distinctly and earnestly demand of our learned divines, some exposition of so remarkable a fact. Let them stand forth and tell us if they can, how it came to pass that the heathen world obtained a knowledge of so grand, so important a doctrine, without a revelation, while the Jews could not discover it in one !

If one were to press me for an answer to the question how the doctrine of endless punishment, and its great prevalence in all parts of the world, and in almost all religions, is to be accounted for, I would answer, that it took its origin and found its chief aliment in the corruption and depravity of the human heart. When we consider the brutal ignorance of the ancient heathen world, and the principles on which it generally acted, principles of almost unqualified selfishness and revenge, with an utter disregard of the rights and the happiness of others ; when we remember that their habitations were filled with cruelty, and their laws written in blood ; when we consider well their whole character and history, we shall cease forever to wonder that this monstrous idea entered and took possession of their minds. All who thoroughly

understand the condition of those ages of the world, and the motives which guided many of their most important thoughts and actions, will acknowledge the truth of what the poet has said of them, that,

“ Hell was built on spite, and Heaven on pride.”

Hell was a place, in their imaginations, where their enemies should suffer torments the extremest in degree, and endless in duration ; and heaven where they themselves might enjoy everlasting felicity. The character of heaven and hell was made to correspond with their own passions, or what their passions would desire, in such a manner as to gratify their selfishness and malice. Dr. Paley suggests a principle that is powerfully operative in human nature, and which low degrees of Christianity itself are unable entirely to overcome—the principle which induces us to look with contempt upon what is common, and enjoyed by our fellow creatures as well as ourselves. We court distinction, and value nothing which does not gratify the passion. Is it singular, then, that the ancients, in those rude ages of the world, should be anxious to separate themselves, and be distinguished above those whom they hated and condemned ? Is it singular that they should indulge this feeling in relation to the future world, and extend it in imagination through eternity ? Is it singular they should do so, especially when pro-

fessed christians boldly acknowledge that if all men are going to heaven they do not wish to go? What is this but building heaven on pride, and seeking it not because it is good, but because it lifts us up over the heads of our fellow men? It needs no comments to show that this is not the religion of Jesus Christ. He came to save sinners; he died for his worst enemies.

When I reflect on the awful depravity of which human nature is capable, on its pride and hate, on its terrible passions, its selfishness and cruelty, I am not astonished that the idea of endless torments arose in the minds of men, and that the faith in it is, and has been, so prevalent in the world. It is but one part of the dark and forbidding picture of the sinfulness of man; it is but one expression, though that is indeed a horrible one, of the possible malice of the human heart. What astonishes me is, that the world so generally regards this terrible doctrine as the voice of God, and consentaneous with all that is good in human nature. I have learned to look upon it in a different light. I consider it not as the voice of God, but of the Prince of Darkness—not as harmonious with what is good in man, but with all that is corrupt, malignant and revengeful.

I wish my readers to observe that the task I have here assumed, whether well or ill done, is a task that, properly speaking, belongs not to us,

but to our opposers. If they will believe the dogma of endless torments, it is certainly their business to show whence that dogma comes, and wherefore they receive it. But they understand full well the advantage of assuming their faith, and calling upon those who disbelieve to disprove it. They know how much easier it is to call upon us to show why endless misery is so commonly believed than it would be, to show it themselves. Still I hope my answer will not be altogether unsatisfactory.

There is a single work, my friends, which I have long wished to see written, and which, if well executed, would be of incalculable service to the cause of christian truth and love. I mean a learned and candid history of the doctrine of endless misery—a history that should, if possible, trace it up to its sources, exhibit its origin and the uses to which it has been put in different countries and ages, and the influences it has exerted upon the interests of morality and religion; a history that should, in a word, unfold to the view of the world one of the most horrible dogmas that the human mind, civilized or savage, ever entertained, and which has existed but to curse the race that gave it birth, and has for ages and ages cherished it in its bosom. That history will yet be written, and it will be a history of horrors.

THE CONTRAST;
OR
MORE FOR US THAN AGAINST US.

And his servant said, Alas, my master! how shall we do?
And he answered, Fear not, for they that be with us are more
than they that be with them. 2 Kings vi. 15, 16.

To understand the force of this language, it will be necessary to glance at its history, which is replete with interest and instruction.

In the days of Jehoram, son and successor to Ahab, king of Israel, the king of Syria made war against Israel, and seems to have taken much pains in securing favorable positions, in order to ensure success. For this purpose he "took counsel with his servants, saying, In such or such a place shall be my camp." This prudence and foresight in laying the plans of his campaign, would, it appears, have proved fatal to the king of Israel, had he not been forewarned by Elisha, "the man of God," who sent to him, bidding him be on his guard, saying, "Beware that thou pass not such and such a place, for thither the Syrians are come down." The king of Israel sent and found it even as the prophet had said, and he "saved himself there," as the sacred historian informs us, "not once or twice," that is, repeatedly,

several times. At these repeated failures of his best laid plans, the king of Syria was greatly surprised, and ultimately grievously troubled, and suspecting some treasonable practices on the part of some of his confidential officers, he called them to council, and said, "Will ye not show me which of us is for the king of Israel? And one of his servants said, None my Lord, O King; but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bed chamber."

As we may well suppose, such mysterious knowledge on the part of the prophet, greatly astonished the king of Syria; and he conceived the design of getting him into his own hands. Whether he wished merely to deprive the king of Israel of such a councillor, or whether he was anxious to avail himself of a knowledge that was so useful to his enemy, does not appear. But be this as it may, he entered at once upon the enterprize of making "the man of God" his prisoner. "And he said, Go and spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold he is in Dothan. Therefore sent he thither horses and chariots and a great host; and they came by night, and compassed the city round about." What notions the king of Syria entertained of the prophet, it is impossible to say, but it must be confessed that he made very ample provision for his capture.

On the following morning, we are told, the servant of the prophet rose early and went forth, and you may judge of his astonishment and perplexity, when he saw the whole city encompassed by a great host of warriors, with horses and chariots. He seems to have recognized at a glance who they were, and probably suspected their errand there. Filled with anxieties and fears, he hastily returned to the prophet, exclaiming, "Alas my master! how shall we do?" Their condition was obviously alarming. They were not men of war, and behold the very prowess of the enemy had come up against them. Besides, they were only *two*, and lo, they were surrounded by a mighty host with horses and chariots! Well might the servant of the man of God, under such threatening circumstances, cry out in despair, "Alas my master, how shall we do?" Truly, what could they do? To all human appearance there was nothing before them but captivity or death.

But the prophet saw what his servant did not see; and filled with a divine calmness and confidence, he replied, "Fear not; for they that be with us, are more than they that be with them." To the mind of the timid servant, acquainted as he was with the prophet's power, this answer was no doubt satisfactory, though it must be confessed that it appeared far more like a paradox, or a riddle, than like sober truth. And we are all ready

to ask what kind of verification it was capable of gaining. The sacred historian shall inform us in his own simple but most expressive language.—“And Elisha prayed and said, Lord I pray thee open his eyes that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw; and behold, *the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire, round about Elisha.*”

The sequel is soon told, and is interesting for the beautiful illustration it furnishes of the almost resistless moral power of kindness and love. At the prayer of the prophet the encompassing host of Syria was first smitten with blindness and then led into Samaria, to the king of Israel. The prophet prayed again, and the eyes of the blind were opened, and they saw with astonishment and dismay, that they were in the midst of Samaria, surrounded by its warlike hosts, and at their mercy. But when the king of Israel saw his enemies thus completely in his power, he said to Elisha, “My father, shall I smite them?—shall I smite them?” The very mode of expression employed by the king, shows how anxious he was to shed their blood. “And the man of God answered, Thou shalt not smite them; wouldst thou smite them whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow? Set bread and water before them that they may eat and drink, and go to their master. And he prepared great provision for them and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them

away ; and they went to their master." And the sacred historian adds these simple but richly instructive words with which he closes the narration : " So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel."

What a cheap and bloodless victory ! And yet it was better than a thousand triumphs ! This one act of kindness, of noble generosity, of deep strong trust in goodness and humanity, is worth more in the annals of our race than all the battles our Alexanders and Napoleons ever fought. It excited no base passions ; awoke no spirit of revenge ; whetted no appetite for blood ; but on the contrary, it called forth the best affections of the human heart—gratitude and good-will. The fruits of this noble action are briefly related, and we see how lasting as well as happy were its consequences. " The bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel." An easy and bloodless victory, I say again ; and yet when was there ever one more truly glorious, more worthy of praise ? Would that the rulers of the nations were wise, then would they oftener follow so good, so divine an example ; and learn even at this late day, that at all times and every where, " mercy is better than sacrifice," and that *kindness*, simple kindness, all meek and gentle as it is, is stronger far than all the weapons and power of war !

But it is not for the purpose of drawing out lessons of political wisdom that I have introduced

this subject. No ; I would rather seek here a source of encouragement and hope to ourselves in the struggle in which we are engaged, and a voice of divine power to cheer us on in the unequal strife, the battle we are waging with popular prejudices and errors, with spiritual wickedness in high places. Such a use of the passage will not, I trust, be regarded as either altogether inappropriate, or far-fetched.

In the case of "the man of God" and his servant, surrounded by a numerous and powerful host, and yet sustained by still mightier, though to the outward eye, invisible allies, I find what seems to me, a not unapt type and illustration of our own condition as a religious body at the present time. Like them, *we* are few in the midst of many opposers. Like them we are weak and comparatively unarmed, while our enemies are strong, "with horses and chariots," and possessed of almost every outward advantage. And yet, like them, there is before us, I believe, a glorious issue and a bloodless triumph in whose very joy our opposers themselves shall participate.

The warfare in which we are engaged, I feel, my brethren, to be a great warfare, the like of which has hardly been seen since the first establishment of Christianity. To change customs, or alter rites and ceremonies, to correct flagrant abuses of power, and bring about a purer form of worship, is no easy task, as all history conspires

to show. But this task is trifling, in comparison with what we have undertaken. Ours is to purify the public faith ; to bring men to think worthily of God ; to entertain just and therefore lofty conceptions of his attributes and government ; to comprehend in some good degree his vast and gracious plans of redemption through his Son, Jesus Christ ; to recognize in that Son the perfect doer of his will, and the finisher of his work ; to look upon, and love, and obey him, as the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person :—in one word, to bring all men to behold in God the universal Father, and in Jesus Christ the Savior of the world ! This, I repeat, is a task of such magnitude and difficulty as to awe, if not to discourage, him who engages in it.

There has been no reformation like this for long, long centuries—scarcely indeed, since Christianity gained its victory over paganism. The so much talked of reformation of Luther did little more than affect the surface of things, and waste itself upon externals. What great fundamental truth did it evolve ? What better views of God and God's government did it introduce ? Did it make the divine goodness more conspicuous ; did it render Christ's salvation more glorious, or more extensive ? No ; if the shadow of paganism rested on the mind of the Catholic world, it has not yet been lifted from that of the Protestant. Nay, we can say of but too many Protestants, as Dr.

Barrow once said of the English Dissenters of his day, "They have the worst opinions concerning God, and represent him the worst that any party ever did." It would seem indeed, as if the various parties of Christians, Protestant as well as Catholic, had been vieing with each other for centuries, to determine who could think most meanly of God, who could most narrow down and limit his great salvation. Unsatisfied with damning the whole heathen world, they have damned all who dissented from their faith, though they were their own household; and have consigned untold millions of little children—such as the Savior took in his holy arms and blessed—yea, and new born infants to the flames of an endless hell! and then impiously charged the whole of that all but universal ruin, upon the justice of the great God of mercy and of love, and to the judgments of that meek, lowly, loving Jesus, who died for his enemies on the cross of Calvary!

From my inmost soul do I thank God for the conviction I feel, that the tide of this impiety, this desecration of whatsoever is most true and most dear in the gospel, has already reached its flood and is now rapidly ebbing away in all the better minds of Christendom. And still, there is room for a vast improvement; still we have an immense labor before us, a labor of equal magnitude and difficulty; for the errors we are opposing are ancient, and have attained great prevalence; they

are enshrined in venerable forms and iawoven with the whole web of public thought ; they are maintained and promoted by great talents and learning, and supported by a vast amount of influence, public and private ; and last, though not least, they find, I fear, but too great affinity with the lowest and worst passions of the human heart.

When we contemplate the great disparity that exists between us and our opposers—the disparity of numbers and advantages, who can avoid the temptation to exclaim with the servant of the man of God, “ Alas, my master, how shall we do ? ”

To the mere outward eye, to the careless or superficial observer, our condition, it must be confessed, appears in many of its aspects to be discouraging and hopeless enough. We need to have our eyes opened, that we may see beneath the surface and mere appearance of things, and recognize the living truth under these deceptive forms, this false outward show. Then should we know and feel that notwithstanding so many things seem to be against us, still we have no reason to fear ; then should we understand clearly what we so much need for our encouragement, that they that be for us, are more than they that be for them ; and indeed that while our opposers are a mighty host with horses and chariots, the mountains round about us, are full of horses and chariots of fire !

But in order the more fully to understand our real condition, it will be necessary to consider more

at length the various circumstances that bear upon the interests of our cause; the advantages and disadvantages that may be regarded as forces resisting its course, or urging it onward. And first, let us consider a few of the most prominent circumstances that tend to support the popular Orthodoxy, and in the same degree to retard Universalism.

1. And here I cannot mistake in placing foremost the vast *numbers* who believe, or at least assist in maintaining, the popular faith. This is the circumstance that first strikes the eye, and perhaps justly makes the deepest impression on the mind. You need but look around you to see what a mighty host of opposers hedge you in on every side. Nor is it one sect or denomination alone, with whom we have to do, but all. Here, if nowhere else, Catholic and Protestant, Calvinist and Arminian, Millerite and Mormon, are agreed. No matter how little harmony or love exists in the church militant, no matter how constant or bitter may be their strifes or quarrels among themselves, the moment Universalism appears in the neighborhood, the warring elements are hushed in peace, and those who were enemies before, like Herod and Pilate of old, when about to crucify Jesus, are at once made friends together. So strong and so well known is this tendency that Dr. Codman, of Massachusetts, some years ago, openly avowed his conviction, on the floor of the

Presbyterian Assembly, that if that then quarrelling and convulsed Church had a common enemy like the Universalists, against whom to range, they would be at peace among themselves !

We all know how much advantage any cause, at any time, derives from mere numbers. Numbers give strength ; numbers make formidable. There are many minds so peculiarly constituted, as to be greatly, almost wholly, swayed by the multitude. They never think for themselves, never rely on their own judgments. Such persons always think and act with the majority, and are never so certain of being right as when they are with the strongest party. This class of persons is never guilty of heresy, and is in no danger of the inquisition, or an *auto de fe*. It is always orthodox, whether that orthodoxy be Presbyterianism or Church-of-Englandism, or Catholicism, or Mohammedism ! How much the numbers of the orthodox world is swelled by this class of hangers-on, it is impossible to say, but we know that they would make a host of themselves. But were these lovers of ease, these followers of the multitude to be all withdrawn, the force of our opposers would still be formidable. What, indeed, are we in comparison with them ? It is difficult to form even a tolerable estimate ; but one thing we know full well, that the disparity between us is immense ; that while we are but a handful of men, they constitute a mighty host, who compass us about on every side.

When I think of their numbers, and remember that our banner must be unfurled in the presence of the whole mis-called orthodox world ; when I reflect that we have nothing to expect from alliances, but that our battle is to be fought, on our part, single-handed ; I confess I am ready to exclaim in the language of our text, " Alas, my master, how shall we do ?"

But it is not in numbers alone that our opposers are formidable. They are not merely a great host, but they have horses and chariots ! In other words they possess wealth, and influence, and all the *materiel* of power, and enjoy all the advantages that a bad cause will allow.

2. But in the second place, our religious opposers have at command immense *wealth*. There is nothing that money can do, which they may not accomplish. They can build schools and colleges, rear churches, maintain great numbers of preachers, send out missionaries to the north, and the south, the east, and the west, educate ministers, and scatter tracts like hoar frost over the length and breadth of the land ! I know not how it is, but their cry, Give, give, seems never in vain.— Their vast enterprizes are carried on year after year, and money flows in upon them from every quarter.

And wealth makes fashionable ; and fashion sways large numbers of every community. Many care not what is preached, nor what is believed.

They wish to attend the *fashionable church*, and are ready to support it, right or wrong. Persons of this class seldom or never mingle with Universalists. They find what is far more congenial to their hearts, among the older, more numerous and wealthy sects.

3. Then our opposers have a learned and influential ministry. I speak of them as a mass. Their learning is not always sound, nor useful. It is not comprehensive nor logical enough. But still, it cannot be denied, that they embody great learning among them, and that it constitutes one of the strongest arms of orthodox power. It must be confessed that they have appreciated the advantages of education, and have made and are making the most honorable preparations for imparting it, especially to their clergy. They well know what advantages it gives; what an influence it lends them; how it causes them to be followed by the multitude and revered by the ignorant and simple-hearted. Look, my brethren, at their Academies, Colleges, and Theological Schools! Think what you will of them, but as you gaze on them, I tell you plainly, you behold one of the grand elements of their present power! Perverted they may be, and instead of being the handmaids of truth, they may minister to the support and perpetuation of error. Be it so; but if they are such mighty engines for evil, should they not be as powerful for good? *Fas est discere ab hostibus.* It

is permitted us to learn, even from our enemies. And never was there a denomination that needed a lesson of wisdom on this subject, more than our own. We act, at least, too many of us speak, as if we feared a thorough education, or certainly the best means and facilities of acquiring it. We think a young man can spring at once from the plough or the workshop into the pulpit; and having persuaded him to make the dangerous leap, we too often leave him to learn by bitter experience, and under every disadvantage, what he should have learned before—how to perform the duties of the ministry—or what is still worse, we leave him to pine under disappointment, and neglect. In other matters we act more wisely. There is not a man among us who would employ a mechanic, who was ignorant of his business; but many think it vastly easier to preach the gospel than to shoe a horse, or mend a chair, or make a garment.

I need not say, after mentioning the numbers and wealth of our opposers, the zeal and learning of their ministry, that they possess great *influence*. This would almost necessarily follow from the fact that they are so numerous and have so much wealth, for these are ever among the most considerable sources of power. And those of whom I am speaking omit no opportunity to extend and confirm their influence over the public mind. It is a well known, and to us a most fearful fact, that

there is scarcely a literary institution, high or low, in the whole country, which is not, directly or indirectly, under orthodox control or influence. No matter by whose money these institutions were founded, or for what liberal purpose ; no matter by whose wealth they are now sustained ; the result is in almost every case the same. Even those institutions which have been reared by the public care and bounty, and which ought therefore to be free from sectarianism, do not escape the common fate. They suffer nothing to escape them. From the infant school kept by the young Miss in her chamber, to the oldest and most venerable colleges in the country, orthodox influence is felt ; and orthodoxy, in some of its forms mingles with the earliest lessons of the horn-book, and in the last teachings of the learned Professor. But their watchful care is not confined to schools and other institutions of learning ; they grasp at every thing. Scarcely a society arises, how benevolent or moral soever may be its objects, upon which they do not lay their hands, and seek to warp it to their own purposes. And what they cannot thus bend to their will, they strive to crush. Against every thing unsubservient to their pleasure they hurl the anathema, and wo to the man or the thing that opposes their aims. They would make the whole community tributary, in one form or other, to their darling faith, and if possible would bend even the state itself to promote their dogmas.

I have said enough, and more than enough, I trust, to show that the work in which we are engaged is a gigantic work. To change some of the leading doctrines of the popular faith, and especially against such a vast opposition made up of numbers, wealth, influence, learning, and the most liberal provision for the perpetuation of that learning and influence, is a task that seems to me Herculean; and I confess the more I reflect upon and comprehend its vastness and difficulty, the more tempted am I to exclaim in despondency of spirit, "Alas, my master, how shall we do?"

But I should essentially fail to give a just view of the power of orthodoxy, if I did not remind you of several prominent advantages which it enjoys, and against which it is necessary for us, as far as possible, to provide. Those dogmas of church orthodoxy, which we feel called upon to oppose and remove, commend themselves with great power to almost every class of men. To the lovers of what is *ancient* they appear venerable from their high antiquity; to the *selfish* they appeal on the ground of self-interest; sometimes in relation to this world, and sometimes to the world to come. To the *timid* they speak in tones of thunder, and wrench from fear what they could never gain from love; and to the malicious, the revengeful, they appeal as to congenial dispositions, and commend themselves by chiming in with the darkest passions of the human heart.

That some of the most popular doctrines of the church are *ancient* can not be denied ; but this is their misfortune ; for they are too ancient to be true. I mean they took their rise not in the revelation of God, but in the passions or fears of the unenlightened heart of man. This is particularly the case with the doctrine of endless misery. The poor heathen were basking in its light, and enjoying all its blessings whole centuries, while the Hebrews, the chosen people of God, and the only possessors of his revelation, were left in the profoundest ignorance of it, and became acquainted with it at last only through the kindness of their heathen neighbors !

That this doctrine gains no inconsiderable consequence and power, from its appeals to *selfishness* cannot be denied. The vast numbers who believe or profess to believe it—their wealth and influence, and consequently their ability to assist their friends in the common business of life, naturally attract the worldling, who is ready to make a “gain of godliness,” or if the thing be wanting, by the show of it. And none are louder in their professions, none more zealous for its support, than those who make the most by it. Others hope to consult their interests for another world by believing the worst of God in this ; and it makes a part of their philosophy that he who believes in an endless hell for his neighbors, is safe from suffering its torments himself !

With how much power the dogma of endless torments speaks to the weak and *timid* you all know. There never was a doctrine in the world so fitted to break down the spirit of a man and crush his soul in the dust. We trace its footsteps all around us in the insanity, suicide and murder, which mark its bloody way. And yet in the midst of this devastation the community sleeps on unconcerned, and takes no heed of the ruin it spreads along its path. Were an idol Juggernaut upon his monstrous car to be drawn through our country, from end to end, and every few days or weeks some poor, misguided, insensate mortal were to throw himself beneath its wheels and be crushed to atoms, the public would soon arise and pronounce its doom with one voice. We forget that there is a Juggernaut here scarcely less destructive, scarcely less bloody, which with insatiate maw, cries, Give, give, and victims by the score are offered up to the invisible idol year by year; and yet the public remains indifferent, and the car moves on to other fields of operation, and other scenes of shame and blood. Look at our lunatic asylums—look at our lists of suicides—look at the deeds of horror often committed by the poor religious maniac, driven to madness by the fears of hell; and tell me if it be not time for the monstrous car to stop! In all our Savior's and all his apostles and ministers' preaching for *forty* years, we find not one solitary instance of insanity pro-

duced by their doctrines or labors. Now not a year passes that does not effect scores even in this country alone ! Is the gospel of Christ changed, or is it another gospel that produces such lamentable results ? But a doctrine that makes its way by such terrible consequences, must exert an unspeakable power over thousands and thousands whom it does not drive to utter ruin. And who can tell how many among the myriads of our opposers are thus wrought upon by *fear*, and driven into the profession of the popular faith chiefly by terror ?

But there is another class still, whom the doctrine of endless misery strongly affects, and may be truly regarded as its staunchest and most consistent friends and advocates : I mean those who find it congenial with their own dispositions and feelings. God forbid that this class should be large : but there are too many facts in the case to permit us to doubt, that there are men, who, if they do not wish the doctrine of ceaseless torments to be true, still find in it nothing to offend their sense of justice or their benevolence ! Malice and revenge are among their most active tempers, and in the doctrine of endless misery they find the fullest gratification for these unhallowed dispositions.

In what I have now said, I have glanced at, rather than fully developed and brought forth to view, the strength and mightiness of mis-called orthodoxy. But no one, even from this glance, can

fail to see that it is of giant power ; and being firmly seated, as it is, in the prejudices of men, and too often in their affections ; being sustained by vast wealth and numbers, and advocated and defended by a numerous body of clergy, with great learning, talents and zeal ; it would be madness in us to conceal the fact that we have engaged in an immense work, and one that to all outward appearances, is most unequal to our strength. When I look upon it in this light alone my heart sinks within me, and I cannot refrain from exclaiming with the servant of the man of God, Alas, my master ! how shall we do ? How shall we, a mere handful of men, with little power of our own, with few advantages—how shall we maintain our ground against such a host of opposers, with such superior strength and outward resources ?

But, my brethren, there is, thank God, another and a better point of view ; another and a more encouraging aspect, in the case. And if we will but duly consider, we may silence all our apprehensions, and calm our minds with words as appropriate and cheering as those of the prophet. "Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them" ! With all their power, with the vast disparity between us and our opposers, we are more than their equal, and shall yet, by the grace of God, spoil them of their might and come off victors. There are agencies now operating in our favor which cannot fail—which

must ultimately secure our triumph. Little noticed they may be, but they have a potency, which no man can calculate, and no human power resist. We need but to have our eyes opened to see that the mountains round about us are, if so I may speak, full of horses and chariots of fire. Shall we glance at some of these agencies, our true allies?

1. The first agent I shall mention as highly favorable to the truth we advocate, and equally unfriendly to the cause of our opposers, is an *improved* and *improving* INTELLECT! It is not to be doubted that the human mind in this country, and throughout all christendom, is—it may be slowly but certainly—progressing. Its powers are better trained, and, if not more acute, they are guided by a wider knowledge and a safer logic. Many of the puerilities indulged in by the greatest men in centuries gone by, are no longer tolerated; and now, within a generation or two, divines are beginning to think that theology itself is capable of improvement! Human creeds are more generally examined, decisions of councils and assemblies are coming to be regarded as no longer final, and in a thousand ways things are changing around us. And it is worthy of being observed that the human mind is growing ever more dissatisfied with the grounds on which endless misery was formerly predicated. A century or two ago the truth of the doctrine was demonstrable, as demonstration then went. God, it was said, was an in-

finite Sovereign, and his moral law was an infinite law; transgression was an infinite sin, and an infinite sin deserved an infinite or endless punishment. Thus the doctrine was established beyond all cavil. They usually went a step or two farther, and found in these circumstances an occasion for an infinite atonement, and consequently for the doctrine of the trinity! This completed the magic circle: the circle of infinities. But where is the man now, making the slightest pretensions to reason, who argues thus? It is really amusing to see how ingeniously men labor to introduce some new ground on which to rest this tremendous doctrine. One man now tells us that the wicked will be endlessly punished, because they will be endlessly sinning; and this is coming to be the favorite philosophy of the doctrine. Another thinks they will be punished forever, because God sees that they would sin without intermission, if they were to live on earth forever. A third has another theory, and a fourth another still. In short every man has his own speculation upon the subject, and what is worse, is after all *dissatisfied* with it, and feels how hollow and worthless it is.

All men are coming to see, more and more clearly, how irreconcilable the doctrine of endless torments is with the infinite benevolence of the Deity. The fact is, the divine benevolence itself is being seen more and more clearly every day. The argument in its behalf is cumulative, and in the

progress of society, in the enlargement of the field of science, in the improvements of the philosophy of religion, history and life, new proofs are ever being added that God is good, vastly, incomprehensibly good—good unto all ! And the more a man sees and knows of the divine goodness, so much the more must he feel that endless torments can never be reconciled with it.

Formerly it was thought the highest problem, and most difficult for orthodoxy to solve—how infinite benevolence and infinite misery could co-exist ; and he was surely a very wise or a very weak man who attempted its solution. But then it was thought *justice* demanded this punishment, and, therefore, it was at least just, and possibly also good. The world has gone on so far that the most orthodox divines seldom waste their time now in attempts to show the *benevolence of infinite torments* ! and think they have wrought wonders enough if they have made it appear with the least degree of plausibility that infinite torments are even just !

Formerly it was supposed that a very large portion of the human race would sink into an endless hell, a world of wo. Now it is more than suspected by every fair mind that such a supposition reflects unfavorably upon the character of the great Creator. Did he design such a vast, measureless ruin ? Where, then, is his benevolence ? Is it to happen contrary to his design ? Where,

in this case, are his wisdom and power? For the last half century divines have been earnestly endeavoring to relieve themselves from this difficulty. Formerly the number of the saved in comparison with the damned, was as the few scattered topmost grapes left after the vintage---as Noah and his family rescued from the old world, or as Lot and his daughters out of Sodom! It has been supposed that the difficulty lay in this disparity; and hence men have been altering numbers, till now the proportions are utterly reversed; and we are gravely told by the most eminent orthodox theologians in the country, that the damned will probably in the end bear no greater proportion to the saved than the prisoners in our state prisons do to the whole population --or better still, as the inmates of a country jail do to all the inhabitants on the globe! In short, Prof. Stuart is sanguine in the conviction that the number of the saved shall so far exceed that of the damned, that the latter will be, as it were, forgotten---a mere drop in the bucket---a small dust in the balance, unworthy of notice or consideration.

It is easily seen that these divines are anxious to soften down the revolting dogma of endless torments as it was formerly taught, and they hope to do this by lessening vastly the relative proportion of the damned. This is all well; and we owe them public thanks for this undesigned acknowledgment on their part of the abhorrent character

of the doctrine in question. They see with the clearness of sun-light that the divine *goodness* cannot be maintained in connexion with the old idea respecting the number of the damned. But there is one fact more, which they must ere long come to see with equal clearness---it is, that the terribly abhorrent character of the doctrine of endless misery does not depend at all, or very slightly, upon the numbers of the damned, or the proportion they bear to those that are saved, but upon the *principle* upon which that punishment is to be inflicted. If it is *just* and *good*---and thus consistent with the moral attributes of the Deity---then, though not one in a million should be ultimately saved, the punishment of the wicked has nothing revolting, or abhorrent in it: if, on the contrary, it is not just and good, then it is infinitely revolting and abhorrent, and would forever dishonor the Almighty, and wrap his throne in the deepest disgrace, though but one---one single soul of man were to suffer it. To prove this requires little argument. We all know that to make a man a murderer, it is not necessary that he should murder a whole neighborhood. One case of wilful, malicious taking of life, is sufficient to entitle him to the character. So it is not necessary for God to consign the whole or half the universe to remediless and unavailing misery, in order to show him a monster; nor is his honor to be vindicated by the plea that notwithstanding the punishment is so horrible, so

abhorrent, he has damned only a few ! No ; the character of the punishment, and consequently of the punisher, is to be determined by its own intrinsic nature, its justice and goodness, or its opposition to these principles ; and not by the numbers who suffer it.

Of this, then, we may rest assured, that the enlightened intellect is becoming more and more favorable to the interests of Universalism, and more and more opposed to the cause of miscalled orthodoxy. Intelligent men of all sects and parties see this, and it must ere long be universally acknowledged. With this ally, then, we may well be encouraged, and soberly begin to think that they that be with us are more than they that be against us. But I pass to remark in the second place,

2. That the whole force of every good MEART, even more strikingly than that of the head ; every throb, and prayer, and wish ; every feeling and sympathy of the benevolent and god-like soul, is directly and powerfully in favor of our faith, and forever and undisguisedly opposed to the whole spirit and teaching of church-orthodoxy. This I hold to be so clear and manifest, that no proof can be necessary to establish the proposition. Go where you will ; enter what church you please ; consult what good man soever you may ; and you will find facts to confirm what I have now said. It is one of the most unfortunate circumstances attending the popular faith that no good man can pray

for it! More than eighteen long centuries have passed away since Christianity was brought to our world; and thousands of millions of our race have believed it, and associated with it the dogma of endless punishment, and yet during all this period, and among all these millions of men, not *one good heart* has ever offered up one single prayer, one single wish in favor of that doctrine. And what shall we say of a doctrine like this—a doctrine that nobody can pray for: for whose truth not one single wish or aspiration ever ascended from a godly soul? But this is not the worst of the case. Its own advocates not only cannot pray for this doctrine, but always pray against it; pray that it may not be true—that it may prove false. They go farther still, and while they cannot pray for *their own* doctrine, which they preach to be true, they most ardently pray—most earnestly and perseveringly importune God to verify *our* doctrine, which they declare to be false. In what strange contradictions do good men sometimes indulge themselves! And is it not passing strange that they will believe and preach their life long, a doctrine as true—*as of God*, and yet cannot, dare not once pray for it? Is God's truth, then, so monstrous, so horrible? or are they so much better than their heavenly Father, that their poor hearts cannot away with what they teach.

What makes the case still worse is the well

known fact, that as the christian becomes better, more christ-like, the more repugnant becomes to him the doctrine of endless punishment. However sincerely he may believe it, he loathes it still; and well for him it is, if he does not secretly hate its supposed author.

This terrible dogma is ever opposed to all the gentle charities, all the divine sympathies of our nature; and the more these charities are developed, the more these sympathies are cultivated, so much the more revolting does this dogma become. In former ages, ages of darkness and blood, when the popular faith on this subject was formed, men did not feel so sensibly as they do now how irreconcilable that doctrine was with all the better dictates of the human heart. Every improvement in society, every step in the progress and moral refinement of Christendom, has tended to widen the breach between a pure humanity and the dark doctrine in question. It is becoming ever more repulsive and abhorrent. It seems fitted only for a state of barbarism and semi-barbarism, such as prevailed during the dark ages, when human life was held as one of the cheapest things on earth, and revenge was most sweet, and hell was the grand panacea for all the ills and sins of this present world. In reading the history of past times, one of the facts that strike my mind with most astonishment is the profound indifference too often exhibited under the universal be-

lief in the final damnation of a very large portion of the human race. There were fathers and mothers, and brothers and sisters, and wives and children, and relatives and friends, then as well as now; and it was well known, at least almost universally believed, that they could not all be saved; but how little did they seem to heed it or care for it. Am I mistaken in thinking this indifference to others' sufferings, is gradually giving way, before the increasing light and benevolence of the age? Public feeling is not yet in this respect by any means what it ought to be, nor can it ever be, while the doctrine of endless torments is generally maintained. That benumbs and deadens the public sensibility. There is still far too little of that true human feeling, exhibited by the poor woman in the streets of New York. A child had been run over by a carriage, and the poor woman rushed into the crowd that gathered around, crying, Let me see the child, let me see! Is the child yours? asked a by-stander. No, said the poor woman, with deep emotion, as she looked on the little sufferer, but *it is some mother's child*. It was the spirit of the gospel that spoke thus: and would to God it might find a more frequent utterance. Would to God the believers in endless torments would reflect that though the wretched victim of hell were not his or her child, or other relative, he is still some mother's child, most closely connected with some body; that some

body, that a whole circle must be affected by his infinite and hopeless misery. Were there such a place as hell, and were one soul to be tormented there forever, we cannot tell how wide a circle it would shadow with an eternal gloom. But, thank God, the human heart is gradually asserting its rights and man is becoming less a savage than he formerly was. And in the humanity and benevolence inspired by nature and the sweet ministries of the gospel, the dogma of unmerciful punishment is yet to find one of its strongest and most uncompromising foes—a foe that shall grow mightier and mightier till the doctrine in question shall cease to be.

We see this benevolent tendency manifesting itself in most of the new institutions of the age. Men are thinking more of the whole race, and laboring more for a wide and universal happiness. Our strongest and most illiberal opposers, have caught something of the spirit of charity recommended in the gospel. The various societies into which they are grouping themselves breathe more or less of the true spirit of Universalism. They are contemplating a kind of universal good! One is to send the Bible to every kindred and tongue under heaven. Another is to send the living minister to every part of the globe. Another is laboring to effect a universal Peace. Another is seeking, by injudicious means, perhaps, but with all honesty of purpose, to break every fetter from

the limbs of man, and set the slave and the captive free. Another puts forth his reclaiming hand and plucks the poor sot from the ditch, and proclaims him once more a man, and speaks to him as a brother still. Another would abolish capital punishment, and soften down the rigors of the prison. In short, the public mind is exerting itself in a thousand ways to extend the sphere of love, and fill it with well directed labors. Our orthodox neighbors, so called, I mean the honest and good among them, are becoming Universalists in their feelings and efforts : their hearts and hands, their best wishes and prayers, are all with us. Thus, in the very camp of our enemies, we have some mighty allies, and as I have before remarked, allies that are being daily more and more influential. Are not they that be with us more than they that be with them ?

3. The spirit and tone of general literature is slowly perhaps, but certainly becoming more liberal on the one hand, and less infidel on the other ; the two classes of it heretofore existing, are meeting together on a middle ground very near us ; and all is becoming more religious and moral, and more true. The genius of all true poetry is, ever was, and ever must be, essentially congenial with Universalism. The attempt to embody the doctrines of the popular orthodox faith in the numbers of poetry must ever prove in vain ; and we need not Pollock's Course of Time as an illustra-

tion of its impossibility. The spirit of poetry is the spirit of beauty and love caught by the poet's eye in every thing; he sees a divine hand every where; he traces a father's love in all the ways of Providence, and it is one of the conditions of the loftiest poetical mind, that it beholds so much wisdom and goodness in all God's works and ways as to feel a divine confidence in it, and be able to say with the author of the Seasons,

"Should fate command me to the farthest verge
Of the green earth, to distant barbarous climes,
Rivers unknown to song; where first the sun
Gilds Indian mountains, or his setting beam
Flames on the Atlantic isles; 'tis nought to me;
Since God is ever present, ever felt,
In the void waste as in the city full;
And where He vital breathes there must be joy.
When even at last the solemn hour shall come,
And wing my mystic flight to future worlds,
I cheerful will obey; there with new powers
Will rising wonders sing: I cannot go
Where Universal Love not smiles around,
Sustaining all yon orbs and all their suns:
From seeming Evil still educing Good,
And better thence again, and better still,
In infinite progression. But I lose
Myself in Him, in Light ineffable!"

And never did the unhappy Cowper sing more sweetly than when fired by the teachings of God's word, he exclaimed,

"Thus heavenward all things tend. For all were once
Perfect, and all must be at length restored—
So God has greatly purposed; who would else
In his dishonored works himself endure
Dishonor, and be wronged without redress."

But not to dwell on this fact, I wish to impress upon your minds the truth that the literature of the age, of this country, and of the world, is becoming more and more free from the peculiarities of orthodoxy so called, and more and more harmonious with our own and cherished faith. I speak not now of our own writers, some of whom may favorably compare with their cotemporaries. I speak not of our lamented Mrs. Scott, whose gentle numbers of sweet and thrilling power will live in our hearts, and in the literature of our country, though she, alas, too early for us, has passed away. But read the works of Bryant, the proudest name among the Poets of our country. Are not his thoughts even as our own? He sees in God the same Father, anticipates the same issue of the divine government. To his eye and his faith there is nothing in the universe over which God will not make himself glorious, nothing which he will not overrule to the happiness of his creatures. In his hymn "Blessed are they that mourn," we see the genuine spirit of christian hope and trust. In the beautiful "Ode to the Past," he speaks in the same strain but more clearly. Having glanced at what the Past has gathered up, he says,

Thine for a space are they—
Yet shalt thou yield thy treasure up at last,
Thy gates shall yet give way,
Thy bolts shall fall, inexorable Past!

All that of good and fair,
Has gone into thy womb from earliest time ;
Shall then come forth to wear
The glory and the beauty of its prime.

They have not perished—no !
Kind words, remembered voices once so sweet,
Smiles, radiant long ago,
And features, the great soul's apparent seat ;

All shall come back, each tie
Of pure affection shall be knit again ;
Alone shall evil die,
And sorrow dwell a prisoner in thy reign.

Could language express more beautifully or clearly the doctrines of Universalism ? All is to be restored but Evil, which alone is to die and have no resurrection ; and Sorrow itself is to remain a prisoner forever in the empire of the Past.

If we turn to foreign writers—consult, I pray you, the pages of Mrs. Hemans, whom I mention here because she is universally known—and where can you point me to a single line in all her works, that speaks the language, or breathes the spirit of a partial creed ? God, humanity, benevolence, true love, the beauty of all outward things, the wisdom and goodness every where speaking forth from nature, and every where exhibited in the ways of Providence ; these are the themes on which she loved to dwell ; and we can say in truth, that if she were not a Universalist, she had the eye and ear, the heart and spirit of one. The same may be said, if I mistake not, of Miss Edge-

worth. Mrs. Sherwood, so long and favorably known in the orthodox world, is now an avowed Universalist. And what shall we say of Moore, Bulwer and Dickens? But I can not, I need not stop to particularize. If the literature of the present day is not more friendly to our faith than that of any past age, I have greatly misunderstood its spirit.

One of the most popular works of the past season, was unquestionably the little series of novels called "Life in Sweden," written originally in Swedish, by Frederika Bremer, and translated into English, for the most part, by Mary Howitt. Few works have met a more ready sale, whether in England or the United States. And yet notwithstanding they came from the bleak North, they brought us the bud and blossom of our holy faith, in a form so inviting, with such a clearness and truthfulness, that I could not but be astonished. I knew not that Universalism had ever penetrated Sweden, and yet it is there so domesticated, so familiar, that it shrinks not from stepping forth in Sweden's most popular tales, and speaks and acts in a manner in which it has seldom or never done in our own land. I cannot refrain from quoting a passage. It contains the sober thought of a young man of fine powers, who was dying in a foreign country, and evidently expresses the faith of the authoress herself:

"But God, the eternal Goodness, the highest Love,

will he forsake his fallen, his unhappy child? Will He do less than a mother does for hers? Oh, no. He will never turn away his face; He will seek his child; He will call it; He will suffer, He will give his heart's blood to win it again, to reconcile it to himself. If God in holy worlds, lives as the giver of bliss, on earth he must live as the Reconciler. This hymn of anguish and home-sickness, which before the memory of man has risen from the earth, this ardent cry, 'Lord come,' is from eternity to eternity answered by 'Here, my child.'"

Again,

"Even on this earth God wills that man shall partake of the fullness of this life, but what before all does Christianity say? *God is Love*. He will therefore never cease to desire the delivery of every man; here, there, in eternity, he will labor for it. God is the only principle ever the same, ever active. O certainly the time will come, when the Son, the eternal word, shall have subdued all to the Father."

Of course I can only glance at this subject, but speak or think lightly of the current literature as we may—one thing is certain, it has mighty power—it is, if true, the full utterance of the thought and feeling, of the philosophy and life of the age. It tells us what men now are and what they are to become hereafter, for the present is the father of the future. I hail the religious tendencies of the literature of the age, therefore, with a kind of rapture. They not only express what has been done in favor of truth in times past, but they clearly foretoken what we may expect in time yet to come. This mighty engine was once employed in an opposite direction; hereafter it will be

truer to its mission, and be one means in the hand of the Savior of furthering his truth, and blessing the world. But I have dwelt too long already on these respective considerations. It is not alone the heads and hearts of our opposers and the world at large that are combining with us, my brethren ; it is not the literature of the day, and all the genial influences of taste and poetry and piety, but my brethren, if we will look upward, we shall see that the mountains are full of horses and chariots of fire round about us.

I can not but think that the spirits of just men made perfect, that shining band, who have passed the trials and dangers of this life, and are now gathered into the rest of heaven, I cannot but think that they take an interest in our cause, and look down upon our poor labors, and rejoice in our successes. With them the passions and prejudices of this world are over, and they now see in universal humanity an object of deepest love, and the strongest hope. They have come to see as they are seen, and know even as they are also known. They have carried their hearts and sympathies into the presence of God ; and they who ceased not to labor and pray for all, when here on earth, surely desire nothing less now they are perfected in heaven.

And look, my brethren, at the angels of God, who stand nearer the eternal throne. Are they not our allies ? Do they not sympathize with us—

they who rejoice more over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance? Shall not their joy be made full? They see not as poor misguided mortals; they know the dignity and worth of one human soul, even when darkened and defiled by sin, and they will not rest in fullness of joy till they behold the great work accomplished, and a world restored.

But turn your eye still higher. What means that bloody cross on calvary; what mean that crown of thorns, and that pierced and streaming side? Behold, O, my soul, thy Saviour, thine elder brother, the Son of the living God! He dies in ignominy, and yet he is without sin. For whom does he thus die? Thanks be to God he dies for the whole world, for you, my hearers, and for me, and for all—the meanest slave, the chief of sinners, the most undutiful and ungrateful wretch; he died for all: and for all that he might bring them to God. “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth,” said he, “will draw all men unto me.” He has been lifted up: shall he fulfil his prophecy? He died for our sins and he rose again for our justification; and now he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom; and there he *must* reign, there is a necessity that he should reign, till he hath subdued all things unto himself, and God be *all in all*. Christ, the blessed Savior, is our ally. He labored, and suffered, and died, and lives for—

ever more, and reigns in heaven to effect what we believe and preach! Shall he fail? Christian souls answer me: shall he in whom ye trust and rejoice, fail, and lose one for whom he died?

You have but one answer. If he fails, heaven fails, God fails, for in this great work of human redemption, they are one. Christ is the Father's minister. Then is God also, the infinite God, our ally; and all good spiritual powers are engaged in behalf of our cause. The eternal and changeless Father, who is love, and who will have all men to be saved—the ever blessed Son who gave himself a ransom for all—the holy angels that rejoice in the redemption of sinners, the spirits of just men made perfect in heaven, the hearts and the heads of all good men on earth, the spirit of the age, the tendencies of the public mind in its thousand manifestations, all conspire to aid us in our holy work, and encourage us amidst our toils and sufferings. “Fear not,” then, my brother, “fear not, for they that be with us, are more than they that be with them.”

ORIGIN OF SIN.

Let not the reader be alarmed. I have no design of losing either him or myself. I shall not launch out into a pathless and untried ocean, but endeavor to steer my little bark slowly and safely along within sight of land, and by perpetually watching the chart and throwing the lead, to avoid the rocks and shoals on which so many goodly ships have struck and gone to pieces in times past.

One thing I shall boldly take for granted, viz. that there *is sin* in the world, be its origin what it may, and even though it had no origin at all. There is sin here, and I charitably hope that no one will dispute the point with me, or even ask for proof, since with the good Jeremy Taylor every one must “confess that *to be*, which he feels and groans under, and by which all the world is made miserable.”

But how sin happened to be here, or whence it came, is a curious question, and one not without the deepest moral interest. It is one, too, that has engaged the attention, more or less, of all think-

ing minds for near six thousand years. "Behold here," says Tholuck, "the greatest question which the reflecting mind proposes to the Eternal! It is the question, which has been started from Zoroaster to Augustine, and from Augustine to Herbart, not only by those few, who prepare the intellectual food for generations and centuries, but bursts also from the breast of him who wants only one mind enlightened, and one heart happy—even his own. It is the question which manifests at once the greatness and the misery of man." It is natural for him who suffers, to seek its cause, and the physician is obliged, if he would attempt a cure, to first make himself acquainted with the nature, and if possible with the origin, of the disease.

Fortunately the case before us admits of but few possible suppositions. We are therefore confined within narrow limits when we attempt to solve the great question of the origin of sin. For it is obvious that it must be either unoriginated, and hence of necessity have existed from eternity, or it must have been produced by some being in time. If it was thus produced, it must have come from God, or from man, or lastly from some intermediate being between God and man.

1. The question first arises whether sin, or in more general terms, evil, may not in its very nature be eternal, that is, unoriginated, without beginning. This was the doctrine, as it is common

ly understood, of Zoroaster, the famous Persian philosopher or mythologist. According to his system ZERUANE AKERENE, *the eternal, uncreated time*, existed from eternity. But whether Zoroaster meant by this that this *uncreated time* was an *intelligent* or an *unintelligent* being, is a matter of dispute among the learned. But be this as it may, from this *eternal time* proceeded two intelligent beings, Ormuzd and Ahriman, the former of whom was the good; the latter the evil principle. But here again it is disputed whether Ahriman, the evil principle, was originally evil, or whether he became so through some perversion of his good powers. Professor Stuart takes Zoroaster's ZERUANE AKERENE for the "original and self-existent God," and of course the Supreme Intelligence; in Ormuzd he sees a being corresponding in "many respects to John's Logos," Jesus Christ, and in Ahriman one who tallies well "in a variety of ways with Satan." He also maintains that Ahriman was, like the popular Devil, "originally good, but through envy of Ormuzd, sinned, fell, and thus became the bitter enemy of Ormuzd." But in this he differs from many of the learned, both in ancient and modern times. Von Coelln says that "upon these questions the ancient Persians were divided into various sects, and that modern scholars have taken them up again." It is easily seen that one party reduces the system of Zoroaster to a *Monotheism*, or the inculcation of

the doctrine of one Supreme God ; the other regards it as teaching a *Dualism*, or the existence of two eternal, self-existent beings or Gods. Prof. Stuart prefers the former opinion ; most English and many German writers have adopted the latter.

Some of the ancient Grecian philosophers, as Plato for instance, maintained that there were two equally eternal and original principles, God and matter. "The former," says Dr. Knapp, "they supposed to be the *rational*, thinking principle, and the origin of all good, physical and moral ; the latter the *irrational* principle and the cause of all evil. This was substantially the doctrine of most of the Gnostics, who found the source of evil in the material bodies by which the soul was chained to the earthly and hurried away into sin." Manes, the founder of the sect called Manichees, carried this idea a little farther, perhaps, and maintained the personality of evil, of the Devil as well as of God.

It might, perhaps, have been expected that such an absurdity would be exploded before the nineteenth century. But, strange to relate, the present generation has witnessed its restoration. It forms one of the most curious circumstances in the religious history of our age, and may deserve some little notice.

I have now lying before me a paper entitled—"The Perfectionist," published at Putney, Vt.

It appears to be an Extra, and is wholly devoted to the discussion of the *origin of evil*. It is written with some considerable ability, and in a very candid spirit. On the question, *Whence came evil?* the anonymous author says :

“Before answering this question, suppose we present another, viz. ‘What is the origin of *good*?’ The plain answer to this, in which all will doubtless agree is, that all good comes from God ; and as God’s existence had no beginning, good has existed from eternity. But what if we say that a like answer may be given to the question concerning the origin of evil ? viz. that all evil comes from the Devil ; that the Devil’s existence had no beginning ; and therefore evil has existed from eternity ?”

He then proceeds to show that this account of the origin of sin is probable, thus :

“It may certainly be presumed, with strong probability, at the outset of all inquiry on this subject, that sin and death did not originate in God, or in any of his works. If we believe with good evidence, that he is benevolent and holy, we may safely be more solicitous to clear his *moral* character of all responsibility, direct or indirect, for the existence of evil, than to extol his *physical* greatness by representing him as the author of all beings and acts, bad as well as good. All the proof we have that God is sincerely at war with evil, invites and requires the presumption that he has not, either by creation, by decree, or by permission, given birth to it himself. If evil did actually originate in the creation of God, by his decree or permission, then the whole warfare between good and evil, which the Bible exhibits, is apparently, so far as he is concerned, only a great farce. The way, then, is fairly open, and a strong presumption plainly points us to the simple, intelligible theory, that *the ultimate cause of all evil is an uncreated evil being ; as the ultimate cause*

of all good is an uncreated good being. This is the theory which we propose to establish."

To make out this rather startling proposition, our author shows, 1. That there is no *a priori* evidence against it. "Orthodoxy itself," he says, "teaches that there are *three* uncreated persons or eternal principles," and he asks with a good degree of point, and certainly with great coolness, "why may there not be one evil as well as two good beings co-existent with the first person of the Godhead?" 2. He maintains that "we find no substantial foundation in the Bible, for the Miltonian hypothesis that the Devil is a fallen angel." In this he is undoubtedly correct, and if his whole system was as demonstrable as this, he could establish it triumphantly. 3. "As there is no evidence that Satan was ever an angel, we have no specific account in the Bible of his creation, his original holiness and his subsequent fall." 4. "All the positive evidence which the Bible furnishes on the subject of the origin of the Devil goes to prove that he is uncreated." Among proofs of this, our author refers to the fact that "God knew good and evil before the fall of Adam"; i. e. evil existed at that time while the whole creation was yet "very good." The Devil is also called "an enemy"—"a murderer *from the beginning*," and he "sinneth from the beginning." 5. "Our position that the Devil is an uncreated being is confirmed by its harmony with many remarkable phenom-

ena which we find connected with his character and history."

It is not my design to enter the field of controversy on this subject. Considered in almost every point of light, the views of our author are no doubt pitiful enough. But still they have some significance at the present moment, regarded as a sign of the times, and of the shifts to which orthodoxy is put for the purpose of maintaining itself. The author clearly exhibits the prominent object which he hopes to attain by the use of this, his "simple, intelligible theory." It is to vindicate the *benevolence of God* in the *endless torments* of a part of the human race.

"The most interesting result of the theory we advocate," says he, "is the glory which it casts upon the *benevolence* of God. Selfishness may murmur and brood over its bearings on the character and destiny of the creature; but loyal, loving hearts will turn gladly to the brighter side—its vindication of the character of the Creator."

The reader cannot but be interested in seeing how our author regards the great controversy going on between his orthodox brethren and the Universalists.

"The foundation of Universalism," says he, "is a *presumption* arising from the acknowledged perfection of God's benevolence. The advocates of that belief argue thus: 'God is perfectly good. But a perfectly good being would not create a universe which should involve in the ultimate working of its elements incurable, eternal evil. It is therefore irrational to suppose that the universe which God has created involves the

endless misery of the wicked.' Or the argument may be stated thus: 'God is *able* to save all mankind.— Since then he is perfectly good, it is presumed that he *will* save all mankind.' We call this presumption the foundation of Universalism, because we believe, without its support, all the other arguments of that system would be too weak to uphold it in the public mind.— The attempts to prove, simply by citation and exegesis of Scripture, that all men will be saved, is sad uphill work. It requires no little audacity—and that not merely against popular belief, but against blazing evidence—to undertake to show that '*eternal punishment*,' in the Bible means limited punishment, or no punishment at all—and when Universalists find themselves compelled, by the exigency of their system, to march up in the face of the heaviest batteries of the Bible, and attempt to annihilate the Devil, their exegetical boldness becomes amusing, if not sublime. We can not believe that sober men would try to extort Universalism from the Bible if they were not braced up to the work by the antecedent presumption against endless suffering, from the benevolence of God. But this presumption is valid only on the supposition (which indeed the opponents of Universalism generally allow, though we do not) that evil originated in God's creation, by his decree or with his consent, and that it is in its nature finite and curable. Whereas the true Bible doctrine on the subject of the origin and nature of primary evil allows no such supposition. Evil existed from the beginning! God was in no way concerned in its origin, either by decree, or by permission, or by choosing as best on the whole, a system which involved its birth. The fact that incurable evil exists, instead of being a ground for impeaching the benevolence of God, is an ultimate ante-mundane, independent fact, for which God is no more responsible than he is for his own existence. However dreadful eternal sin and suffering may be, there is no more occasion to murmur against God on account of it, than he would have to murmur against his neighbor on ac-

count of a flood or an earthquake. We believe that God's goodness is perfect, altogether as unlimited and impartial as Universalists insist ; and we agree with them that it is to be presumed such a being would not have created a system which should involve the birth of incurable evil ; yet we believe that evil exists which is incurable, because it had no beginning ; that it has invaded God's creation, and will destroy forever a portion of the human race ; and there is manifestly no inconsistency between these two forms of belief. The presumption then in favor of Universalism from the benevolence of God is destroyed. . . . The benevolence of God is seen to be complete, only when it is proved that he is not the author, either directly or indirectly of either infinite or finite evil ; and this is proved only by showing that evil existed from eternity. Believing this as we do, though we see enormous finite evil, and believe that evil will exist forever, we can truly say *our* God is perfectly good ; his benevolence is without a cloud. We have no doubt that his good will is large enough to save not only all men, but all devils and Satan himself, if the nature of uncreated evil did not make it impossible."

From this extended quotation, my readers will see how our author regards Universalism, and what method he adopts to silence their complaints against the revolting doctrine of endless misery. Conscious that this darling tenet is indefensible on the grounds on which it is generally predicated by his orthodox brethren, he casts about him for some new device, some novel scheme, by which to bolster up a tottering faith in endless hell torments. He seems to concede that either that doctrine must fall, or some of the Divine attributes must be relinquished. Most of his breth-

ren are willing to sacrifice the *benevolence* and *mercy* of God; he, on the contrary, surrenders his *omnipotence*, and perhaps it will be found in the sequel, his very Godhead itself! Augustine says, "God could convert to good the will of the wicked, because he is omnipotent. It is evident that he could. Why then does he not? Because he would not. Why he would not remains with himself." Calvin endorses this assertion, and is followed by a large part of the Protestant world. God *could* save all men if he would, but he *will* not. This is the popular orthodoxy. Our author reverses the statement, and says God *would* save all men, if he could, but he *can* not.—It is obvious that our author has the strongest reason for his opinion, granting his premises to be true; for his brethren acknowledge that God is *infinitely good*, and why he will not save all men, since he is able to do it if he pleases, they do not pretend to affirm. Our Perfectionist, on the contrary, alledges that God has good will enough to save the whole human family and all the devils besides, if Satan were not too strong for him!

Perhaps upon a careful review of the subject our author would find less occasion to congratulate himself on his new discovery, and less reason to triumph over the Universalist. He might then be left to suspect that his boasted system involves an absolute *Dualism*, notwithstanding all the care with which he has guarded it. True he

ascribes no *creative* power to the Devil, and in this he differs from Zoroaster, Manes, and their followers, but why the Devil has not performed some works of creation it is not easy to tell. For according to our author he is as really eternal, and uncreated, and, of course, as self-existent as God himself, and for aught I can see, equally infinite. In one word, our Perfectionist believes in **two Gods**, one good, the other evil; and why he supposes that the evil God has created nothing I shall leave him to inform us. Besides I would entreat him to reflect if the supposition of two co-equal, co-eternal Gods does not involve the grossest absurdity? I remember Dr. Hamilton, Dean of Armagh, in his "Attempt to prove the Existence and absolute Perfection of the supreme unoriginated Being," lays down the proposition that "There is in the Universe but *one* unoriginated Being, who must therefore be the original fountain of all existence, and the first cause of all things." Coleridge says, "The man of sober mind who seeks for truths that possess a moral and practical interest, is content to be *certain* first, that Evil had a beginning, since otherwise it must either be God or a co-eternal and co-equal Rival of God, both impious notions, and the latter foolish to boot."

But not to dwell on this point, let me say that the Perfectionist has luckily hit upon the only method that can avail to save the doctrine of end-

less sin and suffering. Neither the Calvinist nor the Arminian can maintain it: for they both acknowledge God to be infinite in his benevolence, wisdom and power. Neither of them can find any eternal ground on which to rest the doctrine in question, but the *will* of God. I reason thus; If evil had a *beginning*, as both the Calvinist and the Arminian acknowledge, it is not self-existent, and *may*, therefore, *come to an end*. And there is obviously nothing to prevent its meeting such a fate but the will of God. Hence if it is perpetuated through eternity, it must be perpetuated, directly or indirectly, by the Deity. But this would imply that evil is not inconsistent with his character, and that infinite benevolence and holiness do not reject it, but love and approve it, and will secure its immortality! But this is the same as to say that Good and Evil, God and the Devil, are the same.

To this it may be objected that it is a fact that evil exists here, and if the divine goodness suffers it, as we see it does, to exist a day or an hour, it may with equal propriety permit it to exist through all eternity. This fallacy is ridiculous. It maintains that if it was consistent with the goodness of God to suffer Paul to be persecuted, or Jesus to be crucified on earth, it must be consistent with his goodness to permit Paul to be persecuted, and Jesus to be crucified perpetually world without end! A finite evil may be overruled for good,

or at least so that upon the whole it shall not lessen the sum total of our happiness. But an endless, an infinite evil, by the very supposition of the case, precludes all relief and becomes absolute. The man who cannot perceive the inconsequence of reasoning from the finite to the infinite, would find no difficulty, I suspect, in exalting a man into a God.

But if our orthodox neighbors will allow themselves to be logically consistent, they can easily be driven to take the monstrous leap which our Perfectionist has already taken. The doctrine of endless sin and suffering can legitimately rest nowhere else but on an endless, unchangeable ground of evil, either in the Divine will, where it is now generally but blindly placed, or in an uncreated evil being such as our author maintains the Devil to be. To place it in the Divine will is to make God the Devil at once; to place it in an uncreated evil Being, is, as I have shown, to make *two* Gods, which is impossible and absurd. At the same time it must be acknowledged that the theory of our Perfectionist, ridiculous as it really is, is still more reasonable than the popular orthodox hypothesis. He leaves the good God an amiable and praiseworthy being, who is what he professes to be, *good*, which is more than can be justly said of the other theory. True, he denies his omnipotence and supremacy, and leaves him to contend with the Devil, his equal in every

thing but his infinite goodness, and this he counterbalances by his infinite malignity.

I have just said that our author makes God to be an amiable and praiseworthy Being; he at least asserts that his *benevolence* is perfect and unclouded. A more careful examination of the subject might convince him that the divine goodness is as indefensible on his theory as on that of his orthodox brethren, unless it shall please him to surrender the infinite *knowledge*, as well as the *power* of the Deity.

The case stands thus: God was perfectly acquainted with the existence and nature of his infinite rival, the Devil, from eternity. He also knew before he created the world whether he could maintain his empire over it, or whether the Devil would invade it and destroy forever a portion of his intelligent creatures upon it. He must have known, too, how many, and who, would thus fall under the power of an infinite Devil, and be plunged down into endless and incurable sin and misery. Was it wise, then, for God to create a race like that of man, under such fearful circumstances as these? Nay, was it good? If it is said that God did not know that the Devil would gain a victory over him, and pluck untold millions and millions of his creatures out of his own hand, I still ask whether it was wise or good in him to create a world of intelligences, exposed to such awful hazard? For, on the theory I am consid-

ering, it is very certain that God could not have known that this fatal result would not take place. But if God did not clearly foreknow all this, we reduce him to mere *good will*, without either wisdom to guide, or power to perform its benevolent purposes. And he deserves no more confidence or praise than a *good* but weak and fallible man. In other words he is no God! If he did foreknow the ruin which the Devil would cause in his creation; if he did foresee that a large portion of the human race would be infinite losers by their existence, was he good in creating them? Did he not, under these circumstances, create them on purpose for endless sin and suffering?

It is obvious, then, that the benevolence of God is not to be maintained even on this absurd theory. After all that can be said it brings us at last to the same revolting conclusion that God was not good in giving existence to creatures, who he knew would be infinite losers by it. If he did not know the fate that awaited them, then was he not only unwise but wanting also in benevolence, since a benevolent God would not willingly create human beings whose final destiny was not completely in his own hands.

We ought to add that the theory of Perfectionists is equally defective in a Scriptural, as in the philosophical point of view. If the Bible be true, God is God, and there is no God beside him—there is but one God even the Father. He

only hath immortality. He is the sole Creator and Governor of the Universe, for of Him, and through Him, and unto Him are all things. The Bible therefore leaves no place for an uncreated, self-existent and independent Devil. On the contrary, it teaches in express terms that be the Devil who or what he may, he is to be destroyed. To believe the contrary is to deny the Scriptures.

2. There are very few--none I could hope--who would dare even to implicate the holy and sin-hating God in the authorship of sin. For on the supposition that such a charge were true, it would represent sin, as Coleridge has well said, to be "at once evil and not evil, or God would be at once God, (that is infinite Goodness,) and not God, both impossible positions." And yet there is too much reason to fear that some learned divines, and many excellent men, have so expressed themselves on this subject as to leave the impression on all unprejudiced minds that God is, directly or indirectly, the author of sin! When, for instance, it is affirmed, as in the Presbyterian Confession of Faith, that "God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably foreordain whatsoever comes to pass," it is impossible to repress the painful thought that such a doctrine, however it may be explained, does in fact teach that God is as truly the author of sin as he is of holiness itself. Nor does the disclaimer of this inference,

which the framers of that Creed appended to the broad assertion just before quoted, avail to change or even to modify the literal meaning of the passage, but only to show that their own hearts revolted from the sweeping declaration into which the love of system had betrayed them, and which they were conscious implied vastly more than could be reverently or truly said.

The great Calvin, like his followers before referred to, did not hesitate to say that "the first man fell [i. e. *sinned*] because the Lord had determined it should so happen," and that "those whom God hath created to a life of shame and a death of destruction, that they might be the instruments of his wrath, and examples of his severity, he causes to reach their appointed end, sometimes depriving them of the opportunity of hearing the word, sometimes by the preaching of it, increasing their blindness and stupidity." But while he thus represents God as the great, immutable and infallible executor of his own eternal decrees, who employs men and devils, and sin and rebellion alike, in promoting and accomplishing his purposes, he endeavors to transfer all the guilt from him who thus irresistibly performs his own will, to the poor sufferer, who was involved and carried forward in the vast machinery of the divine purposes, which he could no more accelerate or retard than he could blot out the stars! After teaching that God from all eternity foreor-

dained whatsoever comes to pass, and "orders all things by his counsel and decree in such a way that some men are born devoted from the womb to certain death," the pleasantry is rather pungent than pretty, which informs us that this eternal perdition of man "depends on the divine predestination in such a manner that the cause or matter of it is found in themselves ! For though, by the eternal providence of God man was *created* to that misery to which he is subject, yet the ground of it he derived from himself, not from God." I do not wonder that Augustine, the father of this repulsive theory, cried out under its contemplation, "O the depth; O the depth!" Or that Calvin, its modern restorer, shrunk from its terrible aspect, and was forced to confess that the decree of God, which doomed men before they were born both to sin and to endless torments, was "an awful decree!" There are few men of any sect in this age, I could hope, who do not believe it as false as it is awful.

Divines who adhere rigidly to the theological system of Augustine and Calvin have much to say about God's *secret will*, and by means of this rather precarious assumption attempt to solve many of the otherwise insuperable difficulties of the predestinarian theory. God's *secret will* is represented as often standing in direct opposition to his revealed will. In God's revealed will, for instance, man is strictly forbidden to steal. But

A. B. steals notwithstanding. Now as God has "foreordained whatsoever comes to pass," it follows, as a matter of course, that he foreordained that A. B. should steal. According to what is revealed, God is the enemy of theft, and the punisher of the thief; but according to what is unrevealed, God willed that A. B. should steal and foreordained from all eternity all the circumstances attending the act! And so in all other cases of what we call sin. God has revealed his will that men should be holy, and threatened to punish them if they are not so; but his secret will is that millions and millions of our race should sin constantly, and never become holy either here or hereafter. God says in his revelation that he has no pleasure in the death of the sinner, but would have him turn and live; but according to his secret will, he determined that much the larger part of our race should never repent or turn, but die an eternal death! Thus in numberless instances God's secret will expressly contradicts and opposes his revealed will. Dr. Emmons, of New England, tells us, that "it always was, and is, and will be, God's secret will, that all things shall take place, which he sees will best promote his own glory and the highest good of the universe, whether they are good or *evil*, right or *wrong*, in their own nature." Of course this celebrated divine acknowledged that God secretly wills what is morally *wrong* and *evil* in its own nature, as well as what is right and good!

Such reasoning, or rather such assertions may pass very well in the domain of theology, where men feel at greater liberty to contradict "all common sense," than on any other subject. If brought down to the every day affairs of this lower world, they would be pronounced at once abominable and absurd. If men had two wills, as God is alledged to have, one which they disclosed, and another which they kept secret; and if we observed that they very often *did* exactly the reverse of what they *said*; would it not justly lessen, nay destroy, our confidence in their veracity? What then shall we think of God, who says in his word, *Thou shalt not kill*, and who yet has secretly *willed* and brought about every murder that was ever committed on earth? I can conceive of no device more fatal to the moral character of God than this assumption of two divine wills. It represents the Deity as playing a double part, and if followed out to its just consequences, makes God a liar, and his word a tissue of falsehoods.

There is one circumstance, however, which we ought not to overlook. It is, that if God has in fact a secret will, it is by the very terms of the supposition *unknown* to men. How ridiculous then must appear all their reasonings and speculations about it! They might as well dispute about the vegetable productions of the farthest visible star. And yet many a grave divine has

talked and reasoned on the secret will of God, and told us what it is, or what it requires, with all the accuracy of delineation, which could belong to any scientific subject !

This whole mode of representation which I have now glanced at, obviously rests on the virtual supposition that man is only a curious and complicated machine, made with infinite skill, and who when set in operation performs the part for which he was designed with undeviating accuracy. It acknowledges no true *will in man*, and nothing more than a false and deceptive freedom. For however he may *feel* to be free and to have the power to will, he is firmly fixed in the everlasting chain of cause and consequence, and can no more swerve from his course than the wheel of a watch can at pleasure reverse its movement. Those who entertain these views reason that man is a dependant creature, that God gave him all his powers, and alone sustains him in all his actions, and is therefore, as they seem to think the true and sole *agent* in all that man does. If this were altogether true, it would follow that God is not only the ground and cause of all that exists, but that he determines every thing, and man as well as the rest; and hence, as Tholuck has justly remarked, "not only the good in man but the evil also is the act of God; human life is a tune which an unknown hand plays upon the strings of our souls." To admit all this we must

deny man's proper *personality*, and consider him as really without a will of his own, a mere instrument, a machine in the hand of God, which he has made for the accomplishment of his own great purposes ;—a notion as derogatory to the Creator, as it is to man himself.

3. If then there be no uncreated, and consequently infinite evil being to whom sin may be traced ; and if the holy God cannot be, in any proper sense, the author of sin ; we are reduced to the only remaining alternative, and must ascribe it to some created being. But if sin originated in some created being, it follows of necessity that it was introduced by man, or by a being superior to man, that is, an angel. It follows of necessity, because no one can for a moment imagine that it could be ascribed to any of the lower orders of being, which, since they possess neither a moral nor even a rational nature, cannot, properly speaking, be guilty of sin at all, and least of all in the sense of which I am now treating. The question, therefore, naturally suggests itself here, Did sin originate in an angel, or in man ?

The popular theology, as is well known, without a very rigid process of ratiocination, concludes or rather assumes that sin began its career in an angel in heaven ! The direct proof of this rather startling proposition consists of a single misinterpreted, and, therefore, much abused passage of Scripture. But what is wanting in clear and di-

rect testimony from revelation is made up by shallow reasonings, pointed and fortified by the most inveterate prejudices. Orthodox divines have been quite unable to imagine how man could have sinned, had he not been tempted by the seductive arts of some most wicked and perverse spirit, such as they describe the Devil to be. And yet they find no difficulty at all in assigning the motives which led one of the highest angels in heaven to throw off his allegiance to the Almighty and become a Devil! But is it then so much easier to account for sin in heaven than on earth; and is it more rational to ascribe its origin to an angel of light, than to a creature of flesh and blood? If we find it so difficult to conceive how man could have been tempted to sin without some mighty spiritual tempter, ought we not, in accordance with our own reasoning, to assign some superior tempter in the case of the first sinner in the skies? If a fallen angel was necessary to tempt man, some evil being still higher should have tempted this angel. But this mode of reasoning will never bring us to the origin of sin; and the relief it affords us in the case under consideration, is quite imaginary, since instead of lessening, it indefinitely increases the difficulty. If sin had an origin it began somewhere, and with some finite being: and unless we have proof to the contrary, we may as well ascribe it to man; nay, far better than to an angel: because it is in itself far more probable that man should sin than an angel.

I do not deny that it is possible for angels to sin. On the contrary, I believe it possible for all created moral beings to do so ; nay this possibility is one of the conditions of their moral nature, and forms the basis of their virtue and praiseworthiness. This possibility of sin attached even to our Savior himself, who was "made so much better than the angels;" for he "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Now that Christ was tempted is proof that he was temptible ; and the fact that he was capable of being tempted is also proof that it was possible for him to sin. But it was his glory that while he was tempted as we are, and was as capable of sin as we, he was still without sin. But if sin was possible to Christ, who shall deny it to the angels ? The question is not, therefore, whether the angels could have sinned and fallen, but simply whether they did. It is for the fact that I ask the proof, and I know that for that fact no proof is furnished by the Holy Scriptures. The fall of angels is one of those convenient fictions, which most men know so well how to employ, but seldom to defend. It must be taken for granted, or assumed on the merest show of evidence, or it cannot be taken at all.

Without stopping, then, to examine the pretended proofs of the popular doctrine of fallen angels—a doctrine, which if true, only throws the origin of sin back one step farther without in any

degree explaining it—let us come directly to the consideration of MAN as the author of sin. Here, as all must see, we have the clear vantage ground of knowing in the outset the important fact that man is a sinner—a fact which we have not the means of proving of any other order of beings. That our common progenitor, Adam, sinned, is shown to the satisfaction of all in the Holy Scriptures, and that his posterity are, and have been, sinners ever since, is but too fearfully true. But if we inquire how it happened that man sinned, I know of no other answer to give than that he willed to do so. I cannot believe that it was by the will of God; for if it be said that God fore-ordained, and of course willed, that man should sin, the assertion is attended by two trifling difficulties; first, it cannot be proved, either by Scripture or reason; and second, if it could be so proved, it would only involve the manifest absurdity that what we call sin is not sin, since what God wills must of necessity be “holy, and just, and good.” Nor do I believe that man was tempted and led into sin by a fallen angel, or any superior spiritual being. The Scriptures inform us that man was tempted to sin by the serpent. But that it was not a mere *natural* serpent all are agreed. Some have affirmed that the serpent was simply the Devil, a fallen angel; while others have contended that the serpent was the instrument employed by the Devil to seduce man-

kind. "This exposition respecting the serpent," says Dr. Knapp, "is indeed ancient; but still we find no distinct traces of it in the Old Testament written before the Babylonian captivity." The Dr. might have added that the Bible does not contain a single word which goes to prove that the Devil, or any Evil Spirit was concerned in the temptation. But the only importance which I attach to this point arises from the fact that the common view of the presence and agency of the Devil in the first, and all subsequent sin, is calculated to lessen our conviction of guilt, and to enable us to lay the soothing unction to our souls that if we have sinned it was rather our misfortune than our fault.

The same result generally follows from the popular representations of the present condition of human nature, and the influence of total depravity. If, as the Presbyterian Confession teaches, men are, by the sin of Adam, "utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil;" if it is impossible for us of ourselves to think a good thought, or do a good action, what else can we expect than that men should reason and as far as their belied nature will allow, also feel, that they are little in fault for their sins: that they are suffering under a disease which they inherited from their great progenitor, that is, from sin *inflicted*, which, as Coleridge well suggests, would be a calamity?

Others often speak in a somewhat different manner, but to nearly the same effect. They see so much weakness of reason, and so much strength of passion in human nature, that they soon come to regard sin as quite natural, and a thing of course. Now without wishing in any degree to deny the obvious diversity of human powers, and the consequent difference of guilt in various individuals, I must still confess that I look with some suspicion and distrust upon all those modes of representation whose natural, and almost sole, tendency is to palliate sin.

But before proceeding farther it may be well to stop a moment and inquire more carefully what sin is. For it has been the custom of the religious world to speak of sin, as if it were something which did not necessarily imply any guilt or even any action on the part of the sinner. Thus divines have divided sins into *actual* and *original*; and original sin again has been subdivided into original sin inherent, and original sin imputed. But it is important to define sin in such a manner as to make it correspond at once to the fact which it describes, the universal consciousness of men, and the word of God. Perhaps no better definition can be found than is given by Vitringa and approved by Prof. Stuart: *Sin is the voluntary transgression, or violation of a known law of God by a rational free moral agent.* Dr. Knapp defines it in fewer words,

but to the same purpose ; *Sin is a free act, which is opposed to the divine law.*

From these definitions, which I think correct, it is obvious that the very notion of sin involves the idea of a lawgiver, a law, and a subject of law. But to be a subject of moral law, one must be, 1. *Rational*, in order to understand that which he is bound to obey : 2. He must *possess powers adequate to enable him to obey* : 3. He must be a *morally free being*, that his obedience or disobedience may be voluntary, and justly lay claim to the character of deserving praise or blame, reward or punishment. Of course sin is to be found no where as a necessary, or even as a natural result of the human constitution. I see no sin in the working of any piece of machinery, how badly soever it may operate. I recognize no sin in mere passions, unaccompanied by an intelligent will. The elements and the various kinds of destructive animals, may work as much evil as men, but no one calls their actions sin. There is no sin, properly speaking, in the rage and violence of the maniac. Knowledge of the law, freedom and ability to obey it, are the indispensable conditions of sin in any being. If this be so, it points us at once to the *free will*, the highest power in man, as the seat of sin.

The Scriptures teach us that God made man upright, and that when he had finished the creative work, he pronounced it *very good*. How,

then, it may be asked, could evil proceed from that which was good? I answer, that God was pleased to create man in his own image; but to be so man must be a rational and moral being, endowed with a true personality; by which, I mean that he was qualified to act of and for himself, without which he would be no other than a curiously devised machine acted upon solely from without, and bound fast in the everlasting chain of cause and consequence. But in conferring upon man moral powers, the Creator necessarily exposed him to the *possibility* of sin, because in a finite being moral good itself is possible only as it stands connected with the possibility of evil. This may be made apparent by considering that it is the self-same powers which are employed in holiness and in sin. Man has not two classes of faculties, one for working righteousness, and the other for doing evil. If he had, then evil would, in part, be his proper work, and in doing it he would only act in conformity to his true nature. But in willing that which is good, we employ the same powers that are employed in willing evil. Nor could it be otherwise without involving a contradiction. In making us moral beings, therefore, and capable of the happiness of which moral natures alone are susceptible, we must be free, and as free to choose evil as good. No restraint could be laid upon our powers, without degrading us from the rank in which Heaven was

pleased to create us ; without unfitting us for the attainment of our true ends. I can conceive of no way in which the possibility of sin, in such beings as we are, could have been avoided. Had we been made higher or lower, the danger might perhaps have been lessened, but it could not have been wholly shunned without depriving us utterly of our moral nature.

Now this *possibility* of sin is all that can be justly ascribed to God ; and presumption itself would hardly charge this as a fault upon the Deity. This is all the permission he can be said to have granted it. He made man good, and endowed him with the powers necessary for virtue and happiness. That man has abused his gifts, and converted the good, in part, into evil ; that he has soiled and defaced the image of God in him, is in no manner to be ascribed to God. That is man's own work, and for it man alone is accountable.

Nor can the divine benevolence be impeached in this matter. This very personality and freedom which we so much abuse is the highest gift, perhaps, that God could bestow. It was not only a good when it was first conferred, but it is so now, amidst all the evils and miseries to which its abuse gives rise. It cannot be doubted, perhaps, that God clearly foresaw all these evils and miseries, as one of the accidental consequences of human freedom, and yet he also saw with equal

clearness that it was worthy of the divine wisdom and benevolence to bestow upon man a gift attended with so many and so serious dangers; he saw that it would still be the means of a vast, a measureless felicity, stretching itself through the whole future; for he recognized sin not as something infinite or self-perpetuating, as men now speak, but as a finite and temporal phenomenon, "arising," as a German writer has well said, "as a kind of accompaniment in the formation and developement of finite powers endowed with self-subsistence." Had sin and misery been foreseen by the Omniscient as they are now generally believed to be, *endless and indestructible*; had he foreseen in evil a power that he could not control, a power which would work out his own defeat, and pour contempt upon his honor; had he foreseen it erecting a mighty empire in the midst of his own universe, and bringing into eternal subjection one half, or indeed any portion, of his moral creation, can it be imagined that he would have said, "Let us [make man in our image, after our likeness?" The creative act under such circumstances as these, would be a public acknowledgment that sin is not altogether rejected of God, that he was willing to open up an opportunity for its introduction, that it might abide with him forever. Let the advocates of endless sin and suffering, prove, if they can, that God opposes them and wills them not. Let them

♥

prove, if they can, that God is too holy to look on sin with approbation, while at the same time they acknowledge that he not only permitted its introduction, but imparts to it his own immortality, and fixes it in his universe for eternity.

The existence of finite and temporal evil I can thus, to my own satisfaction, reconcile with the attributes of God, with his infinite wisdom, holiness and love. But beyond this I cannot go. Tell me that sin is in its nature infinite, or in its duration without end, and I leave you to explain its existence in the universe of God as best you can; for I believe with Bp. Butler that, "it is a manifest absurdity to suppose evil prevailing finally over good, under the administration of a perfect mind."

My views then on this subject are summarily these: God made man in his own image, that is, a moral being capable of moral improvement and happiness. But to be this, he must be morally free; and freedom to good is not possible in a finite and imperfect being, only on condition of the possibility of evil. In other words, a finite and imperfect being to be free, must be free to choose evil as well as good. The only alternative, then, which it is possible for us to conceive, was to create man as he is, liable to sin and suffering, or not create him at all. To have made him a machine, or even a brute, would have placed him beyond the possibility of sin, it is true,

but only by denying him all morality. To have made him perfect, and thus raised him above the possibility of sin, would have been to make him God at once, and therefore impossible even for the Almighty. God did not foreordain that man should sin; he did not will it; for had he done so, his ordination or will would have been man's law, and obedience to it would have been virtuous. He did not even permit sin any farther than creating man with powers which rendered sin possible may be construed into a permission. On the contrary he forbade it, and held the guilty transgressor of his holy law responsible for his sin. But sin is finite and temporal, and God has made ample provision for its ultimate destruction. In the moral nature which he has given man, he has manifested his purpose to bring evil to an end. The wicked show themselves to be out of their proper sphere, and to be warring against their own nature. Else why that perpetual struggle, that restless, discontented and unsatisfied state in which they always live? If evil had any permanent ground, it would manifest a natural and firm growth, and the sinful would come to find a kind of happiness in sin, that should be steady and sufficient to meet their wants. But the history of six thousand years proves that it is not so. All observation and experience show that a life of sin, amidst all its outward seeming, is still unnatural and forced, unsubstantial and false. There is

always an inward contradiction in the sinner's own soul, which cannot be removed ; an internal faint-heartedness and insecurity that perpetually betray themselves, if not to the world, at least to his own consciousness. It is in vain to tell me that such a character is formed for eternity. It has no trace of permanency upon it. But look at the good man : there is quiet, and a calm sunshine upon the soul that no storm, no cloud can shut out. And the deeper you penetrate his heart, the fresher and fuller will be the fountain of his peace. In the tranquil joy which now fills his soul, you can recognize the elements, the germ of a blissful immortality toward which he is advancing.

But it is not in our moral nature and the course of Providence alone, that God has indicated his purpose to eradicate sin and attract man, a free being still, to himself, and to heaven. He has manifested this still more clearly in revelation, where he has foretold the bruising of the serpent's head, but especially in the New Testament where he has openly exhibited the Great Redeemer as one who "taketh away the sin of the world," and who seated upon the throne of truth and grace, "must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet," and who, "when all things shall be subdued unto him," shall "himself be subject to him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." This is the end contemplated in the Gospel, and without attaining it, God would himself

suffer defeat. But as Bockshammer has well said, "Then will God be All in All when every creature without ceasing to have an individual existence, shall yet find itself in willing accord and harmonious union with Him."

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

SCRIPTURE LESSON, LUKE II. 1—20.

The birth of Christ! What an event in our world's history!—and what a host of rich and blessed consequences have flowed and are still flowing from it. And yet it was an event of apparently a very humble cast, that excited no considerable attention at the time of its occurrence, and promised little to the world beyond any common-place event.

God, it is true, had spoken glorious things to his chosen people. From time to time, through a long lapse of ages, he had spoken of One whom he was ultimately to send to the earth as his great Messenger, and who was to declare his heavenly will. Even in the garden of Eden, the birth-place of the human family, and of sin, God announced the future coming of "the seed of the woman," and proclaimed the object of his mission, *to bruise the serpent's head*. Four thousand years had passed slowly away since that great design of the All-wise was made known to his sinful crea-

tures, and now the time was drawing nigh for its fulfillment. And never did the world see a clearer illustration of the truth that "God's ways are not as our ways," than we behold in this great transaction. Human wisdom would have surrounded such an important mission with pomp and show; would have dazzled all eyes with its outward splendor, and made its visible glory equal to its inward power. There should have been a long train of preparation, and the minds of all men should have been excited to breathless attention, and held in anxious suspense, awaiting a development that should at last burst upon their senses with the suddenness of the lightning's flash, and overwhelm them with the grandeur of its display. If the great Messenger were to be born of woman, it should have happened only in the palace of a king, or in the hall of some proud, rich noble. Ministers of state should have been in waiting, and heralds with swift horses ready to bear the glad tidings from city to city, and from land to land, to the ends of the earth. In short, nothing should have been wanting to invest the scene with interest, and clothe so great an event with a corresponding majesty. And yet how unlike all this was the method infinite wisdom chose to adopt. In this great transaction there was engaged none of the pride and pomp of earth; and it seems as if God avoided every thing that would be likely to attract the eye of a gazing world, or arouse the

vanity of the human heart: and where he called in mortals to be witnesses of his working, it was not the great, nor the rich, nor the proud that he called, but the poor, and lowly in mind, those in the humblest ranks of life, those down-trodden and despised.

No, the world at large knew nothing of what was passing at Bethlehem. The great were engaged in their midnight revels, or sleeping in their beds of down when the Savior of the world was born, and knew not that there was transpiring in a stable an event so auspicious to the children of men. And had they been in Bethlehem itself, what should they have beheld beyond what is witnessed every day of our life—a scene of poverty and suffering? No, in appearance nothing was changed, but the affairs of the heavens and of the earth were as they had been ever of old. Had we ourselves then lived and been in Judea, we should have seen the sun go down as usual beyond the western mountains, and lose himself in the great sea, and the shadows of evening would have gathered around us silently and sorrowfully, as they had done a thousand times before, and the burning stars would have shone out one by one, and lit up with their pure light the face of the sky; and we should have gone to our rest with nought to trouble us but the living consciousness of sin, the fear of death, and the dread of an offended God, and dreamed not that we had

a Father in heaven whose love was ready to burst forth, and that salvation was so nigh. Nevertheless, before that night's rest should have been ended, before the light of the stars should have been extinguished by the beams of the rising sun, one would have been born, greater than all the kings of the earth, a Savior whose name and power should be known and felt through all lands and all ages of the world!

But let us look in for a moment upon the scene we are now contemplating, and ask ourselves what lessons it teaches, and what hopes it is calculated to inspire. The past day had been a busy and exciting one in the little village of Bethlehem. For it was the season appointed by the Emperor's order for the general taxing; and "all went to be taxed, every one to his own city." And Bethlehem was full; its own citizens were there, and with them many of their families who had scattered away, and were dwelling in other parts of the land. And among these semi-strangers were to be seen a young man and his wife, who had come up from Nazareth in Galilee to register themselves in Bethlehem, because to this place did they originally belong, for they were of the house and lineage of David. But the vicissitudes of the world had deeply affected this family; for the crown and the sceptre, the wealth and luxury that once belonged to it, had passed away centuries before, and now these descendants of

that proud and powerful house were among the humblest of the land. Joseph was a carpenter, and in Nazareth he ate his bread in the sweat of his face. Night came on ere yet the business of the day was ended, and this young pair sought for lodgings; but alas, there was no room for them in the inn; friends, they seem to have had none, to take them under their roof; and compelled by necessity they, at last, betook themselves to a stable, resolved on there spending the night. But it was to be no night of rest to them; the hour had arrived for this young wife to become a mother, and the inspired historian tells us that she "brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger." Oh! poverty, thou art indeed a bitter evil; but thou hast been honored as no station of wealth and affluence ever was. That poor young mother, with her new-born babe lying in a manger—was there mother ever so blessed—was there mother whose name was ever so reverently spoken by half so many lips; whose mild image hath sunk into half so many hearts? Her form is that of the poet's and the artist's ideal of beauty, and her look the look of all matronly love and grace. And that poor child who entered the world under so untoward circumstances—was he not the Son of God and the Saviour of that world which so coldly received him, which offered him no cradle but the manger!

Wonderful indeed are God's ways, for it is his pleasure to choose "the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen; yea, and things that are not, to bring to nought the things that are;" and all this that no flesh should glory in his presence.

What mortal could have dreamed when looking upon this scene of poverty and suffering, that here in this stable was commencing a series of events the grandest, the most beneficent the world ever saw? Who could have imagined that from this manger was to go out an influence that was to spread over the whole earth, change the whole aspect of society, introduce new and unheard-of, unthought-of institutions, modify and reform all governments and laws, civilize the savage man, and make human life an infinitely higher and sweeter blessing? But so it was. And I propose in the remainder of this discourse to point out a few of the many benefits which have flowed from the birth of Christ which we are celebrating this evening. In doing this I must necessarily be brief, and may well be so, for the theme to which I invite your attention is familiar to all your minds.

I. I mention as the first, and perhaps the most important of all the present blessings which Christ

has conferred upon the world—the most important, because the source of all the rest—the clearer and better views of God which it reveals to the human mind, and which are being more and more widely diffused through the world.

Whatever may be regarded as the source of religion, it is still true that at the moment when Christ appeared there was great need universally of a more perfect, and, I may add, a more amiable representation of the Deity. Among the heathen there existed a strange medley of opinions, crude theories, dark superstitions, gross conceits, which generally terminated in doubt, and led to no good practical results whatever. It mattered little how they speculated, or what fine conceptions on individual points they sometimes expressed; if their dreams and reasonings did not actually result in evil, they seem very seldom to have done any good, and left the world little wiser and little better for their existence. It is observable in all the pagan writers in relation to the Deity, that they almost uniformly speak of him in a cold and formal manner, inconsistent with any deep feeling on the subject. They reasoned about the Deity as the mathematician reasons on a proposition in mathematics, only without his accuracy. There was no moral element in their theology. It did not speak to the human heart. It had no sympathy for our race, nor our race for it. According to its representations, God was a being

afar off, good perhaps, but idle and indifferent to human affairs, and too unconcerned for the welfare of his creatures, to excite any love or secure any obedience, except such as fear alone could produce. I speak now of the philosophic theology. There was among the people at large a gross, vulgar superstition, which was equally powerless to good, perhaps, but more mischievous in its tendencies.

“Fear made her Devils, and weak hope her Gods,
Gods partial, changeful, passionate, unjust,
Whose attributes were rage, revenge or lust.”

Among the children of Israel, there was of course a far more consistent Theology. They enjoyed the advantages of a revealed religion; but still they had succeeded, by ages of corruption and perversion, in virtually robbing it of its chief excellencies, and leaving it almost a dead letter. It was the testimony of Christ himself that they had “made void the law of God by their traditions.” Indeed, it is obvious enough that the Mosaic religion among them had dwindled down to a mere system of trifling, of outward rites and ceremonies, and possessed little of a true life-giving power. The Jews were punctillious in their tithing of mint, anise, and cummin, but neglected the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and fidelity. They prayed often and much, but rather to be seen of men and accounted religious, than from any sense of the duty

of prayer, or of its privilege. In short they had but "the form of godliness while they denied the power thereof."

At the same time it must be confessed that their religion in its best days, was but an imperfect one. No one can read it without seeing that it was rather an outward than an inward institution, and, of course, that it did not go to the depths of the human heart. It had a tendency to make men religious not by persuasion and love, but by terror and force. It had many threatenings and outward punishments, and held an iron sway over the body, more than over the heart. This imperfection may be traced, if I mistake not, to the fact that it presented the divine character in a light better calculated to inspire fear than love. As has been well observed by Dr. Mangey, "The titles by which God chose to be called under the old law, being drawn from his power and superiority, carried some sort of diffidence along with them. The names *God*, *Lord*, *Lord of Hosts*, *Jehovah*, did in their natural import express his majesty distinct from his goodness, and were, therefore, only qualified to raise in the minds of his worshippers terror without hope, and reverence without comfort." It is true some of the Israelites attained to better conceptions of the Deity, and therefore loved as well as feared him. But to most of them he appeared great rather than good, and their obedience was secured more

by apprehensions of punishment, than by the gentler, but still surer motives of affection.

But from the lowly manger of Bethlehem there began to go out a new and a life-giving doctrine. There God appeared as a FATHER, whose goodness and love know no bounds, who embraces a world in his parental affection, and seeks the highest good of all his children. Men may think what they will of this doctrine; they may regard it as trifling; but I tell you, it lies at the basis of Christianity, and to it must be ascribed, at last, all the blessings that Christianity brings us. It is the grand, central truth of our holy religion; and without it the Christian would be but a Jew still. It is among the other doctrines of religion, what the Sun is among the heavenly bodies: it gives to many what light they have, and outshines, overwhelms with its flood of glory, all those that shine of themselves.

The great doctrine that God is our Father, was needed, and will ever be needed, to bring him near to us, and to make us feel that we may approach him with the boldness, and rely upon him with the confidence, of a child. We are apt to be overwhelmed with the idea of the divine greatness and majesty. The thought of God's omnipotence is terrible, if it be not softened down with the reflection that he is a father; and then his infinite power appears lovely, because it becomes in a moment the unfailing pledge of our protection

•

and safety. The child-like soul can say, "My father is greater than all, and none can pluck me out of my father's hand."

I know this truth is not easily received by a sinful and unbelieving world. It is difficult to make the wicked understand and feel that God is a Father; their whole life, their conduct and thoughts, lead them to regard him in another light. They see in him nought but the threatening Governor, the frowning Judge, and the unfeeling Executioner. They love him not, and they know not how it is possible for him to love them.

And it needs not my declaration to make it evident that the church itself has found it difficult to look upon God as a Father. He who will, with an impartial mind, thoughtfully consider its history and its creeds, will ask no farther proof of the fact. Its blindness to spiritual beauty, its creeds of damnation, its history of persecution and blood, show with the clearness of demonstration, that it has not recognized God as a Father. Even to this very day it is so. This is one of the last truths that man is ready to receive, or if he believes it for himself, he denies it to all the world besides. He can not conceive how God can be a Father to the wicked, or love those who disobey him. The fact is, men forget God's parental character and relation, and ascribe to him motives, feelings and conduct, which are forever inconsistent with the idea of a father.

Still this truth is gradually gaining ground in the world. We need but compare the theology of the present day with that of any past age, in order to remark the progress that is being made in this respect. Creeds are being softened down, some harsh doctrines are already obsolete, and others are gradually becoming so. We ought not to be discouraged, for if the religion of Jesus Christ is true, God will yet be universally acknowledged as a father, and his fatherly love shall embrace all visibly, as it now does all really, and man shall be saved and happy.

2. But in the second place, I wish to call your attention to the blessings which Christianity confers in making us more intimately acquainted with God; and by this peculiar process : Christ is the image of God, the representative of his character. In Christ we see the Father. And without him, I cannot conceive how the Father could have been truly revealed. I have spoken of the influence of God's greatness and majesty upon the human mind; and I will now add that all the divine attributes, since they are infinite, are in a manner vast and incomprehensible to our thoughts. And I doubt not that much of all that is said in the world concerning the divine perfections is spoken, as we speak of what lies infinitely beyond our conception, and therefore makes but a feeble impression upon the mind of either speaker or hearer. The question has been often asked, How

do we know that goodness, or love, or justice, are in God what they are in ourselves?—Now we needed some one to stand as a Mediator between us and God ; some one who should bear our nature and with whom, therefore, we could sympathize, and in whom still the divine life should be manifested. This mediator we find in Christ Jesus. For he was the seed of the woman, and tabernacled in the flesh, and still he was Emanuel, God with us; or in other words, God was in him—the fullness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily ; so that he who sees Jesus, sees the Father. That is, in Christ's life we behold the attributes and character of the Deity himself; his love is the love of the Father ; his goodness the Father's goodness ; his compassion the Father's compassion. In one word, we see in Christ a perfect image of the Father. He spoke the Father's words; he did the Father's works ; he is accomplishing the Father's will, and shall ultimately effect the great salvation that he devised. Christ illustrated, therefore, the doctrines which he taught, so that while he teaches us to call God our Father, he aids us at the same time to conceive aright of his divine character.

Nor can the attentive reader of the New Testament fail to observe how unlike he is to most of the ancient, and many of the modern, teachers of religion in this respect. They seem afraid that men will think too well of God, that they will

repose too much confidence in his goodness and love. He on the contrary labored incessantly to make men think better of the Deity than they did, and to inspire them with a deeper and truer confidence in him. How often did he complain of their little faith, and how many beautiful methods did he adopt for the purpose of bringing home to their hearts the great facts of the divine goodness and care. He pointed to the birds of the air which God feeds; to the flowers of the field, which he clothes with matchless beauty; and besought his disciples not to distrust a goodness that could stoop so low. "Are ye not much better than they, O ye of little faith?" He called them to consider their own parental affection, and to believe that God was much more ready to give his richest gifts to his children, than earthly fathers are to give good things to theirs. He taught that while five sparrows were sold for two farthings, not one of them falls to the ground without our Father; yea, and far more, that the very hairs of our heads are all numbered. What a ground of confidence is here opened for weak short-sighted man! He knows that there is one Being above him whose omniscience takes in all creatures and all events, and that Being is his Father. If the Psalmist in the dawn of revelation could say as he has done, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want;" the christian in the per-

fect day, may well exclaim, "The Lord is my Father, surely I shall not want."

3. But I pass thirdly to speak of the blessing conferred upon our race in the assurance of a resurrection from the dead. This is a blessing which is so great, and lies so far beyond our comprehension, that we can but very poorly appreciate it, but still we know it to be a blessing of vast richness and worth. We know how instinctively we shrink from death, and with what a chill the very fear of it falls upon our heart. We have watched, our life long, its doings; it has come into our own little, and loved circles; and no one can say, I never lost a friend. Oh the grave, the grave! How dark and cheerless, and full of gloom! There rest the old and the young; the mother with her yearning heart; the bridegroom and the bride; and there the sweet infant sleeps in its innocence. All go down thither alike, and the dust of the valley covers them all. Are they gone forever? Shall we meet them no more? These questions have pressed upon all sensitive hearts, upon all thinking minds, in all ages of the world. There had gone up from every land, and hamlet, and heart of the earth, for four thousand years, the cry, "O, God, is there no salvation from the grave?" And then came the answer. It proceeded from the manger of Bethlehem! That poor child, that we have seen born in a stable, stood amidst his native hills and proclaimed him-

self, to be "the resurrection and the life!" The young Teacher died upon the cross, and was buried. But the grave could not hold him, for he was the Son of God; and on the third day he rose from the dead, and brought life and immortality to light. And now, "as in Adam all die even so in Christ shall all be made alive," and "they that are accounted worthy of that world and the resurrection from the dead, shall die no more, but are as the angels, and are children of God, being the children of the resurrection."

That the christian world derives but little comfort from this great doctrine, is owing to no want of fullness and comfort in it. It is to be ascribed to the errors and false doctrines that are received and cherished in the christian church. For notwithstanding all Christ's teaching, they are still in doubt whether the resurrection is to be regarded as, upon the whole, an infinite blessing or an infinite curse!

4. From the manger of Bethlehem has gone out a new spirit into the world—the spirit of universal philanthropy. Christianity has already broken in pieces and annihilated many of the barbarous institutions of the world; it is sweeping away the partition walls that divide nations and make enemies of men. It is a remarkable fact that Christ was the first to conceive of a universal religion. As he represented God as a universal Father, he of necessity made all men brethren,

and there could of course be nothing in his religion that did not breathe the very spirit of love and good-will. It is hardly possible for us at this distance of eighteen centuries to estimate the influence of Christianity in softening down the tempers, and reforming the conduct, and improving the condition of society and of the individual man. The change from the condition of refined Greece and Rome, is great beyond all that you could well conceive. What then must it be from the state of the barbarous nations of our Savior's time? One needs to read the history of ancient times, with direct reference to this point, in order to see the distance at which Christendom now stands, from all that was most cultivated and honored then. Where are many of the bloody institutions of these states? Where are their gladiatorial shows, where hundreds and thousands of the finest specimens of the manly form were sacrificed to a mad love of slaughter. Gone—gone, under the mild and benign influence of the christian religion, and will never return. But I must not dwell on this point. I pass therefore,

5. To observe that we have the strongest assurance that Christianity will continue to go on till it has finally planted itself over the whole earth, and brought its millions and millions of inhabitants to embrace the faith of Jesus of Nazareth, and to rejoice in his salvation. No, nor shall it rest till it has accomplished its great purpose, and

effected the holiness and happiness of all mankind, generations past as well as future.

In reflecting on the introduction of Christianity in the person of its founder, we shall find occasion to admire the wisdom of God who gave us for our Savior one who partook of our nature, and was acquainted with its temptations and infirmities.

It is also worthy of our notice and admiration, that the Savior whom the goodness of the eternal Father provided for us, came in poverty, and was therefore the better qualified to preach glad tidings to the poor.

In reflecting on the Gospel, my brethren, never forget the stable and manger of Bethlehem; never forget the poverty of its great founder, or of those whom he first chose to be his heralds. Never forget that it was among the poor that he found his first converts, and that for eighteen hundred years his religion has made its noblest progress, and performed its most beneficent ministry among the poor. And let this teach us to be humble, to regard all men as worthy of our kindness and love, and finally to go out in imitation of our great Master in doing good.

AN EXAMINATION

OF THE GROUNDS OF THE DOCTRINE OF ENDLESS PUNISHMENT.

I propose in the present article to examine, with some degree of care, the various grounds on which the advocates of Endless Punishment are pleased to rest that tremendous doctrine. By *grounds* here, I mean something quite distinct from the "proof texts" usually quoted, something indeed that lie back of these, and on which their popular interpretation is made to stand. Perhaps I might say in a single word that I propose an examination of the *rationale* of endless punishment; but my object will be better understood as I proceed, and fully comprehended, I trust, in the sequel.

It cannot be necessary for me to suggest to any thoughtful and candid reader that the doctrine of endless punishment is one of a most peculiar, and indeed, a most momentous character. It stands apart from all the other doctrines of revelation, and, both from its nature and the awful consequences it involves, demands a more than ordinary consideration. To pass it over lightly would

be, perhaps, to do it injustice ; to receive it without the most conclusive, the most irresistible proofs, would certainly be to do far grosser injustice to ourselves, and to throw contempt upon that great and good Being whom we all acknowledge as our Creator and our Judge. Endless Punishment ! I beg my readers to reflect upon it for one moment. Inconceivable, never ceasing misery ! What a thought ; and what a doctrine to be preached and believed by those who confess the moral world to be under the perfect government of an all-wise, almighty and all-merciful God ! Were it not for the well known fact of its prevalence, one could hardly think it possible for such a doctrine to find a resting-place in any human heart or head, and least of all in the heart or head of a christian.

But before entering directly upon the proposed examination it may be profitable to consider briefly the *place* of this terrific punishment, and some of the circumstances that combine to make up its horrors, and also the *number* of our fellow beings who, it is believed, will suffer it. This will enable us to form a better conception of the doctrine in question, to appreciate its claims, and perhaps prepare us to enter upon an examination of its grounds with a more earnest spirit than we should otherwise be able to bring to its investigation. I cannot be mistaken in thinking that thousands and thousands of christians believe in endless punish

ment, not because they have examined it and been convinced of its truth, but simply because they have never *thought* of it, never have reflected upon its awfulness even for a single hour! They may have heard much of it, and talked, and even preached about it for years; they may have argued and speculated upon its proofs, and grown angry in its defence, but still, I repeat they have never *thought* of it. Let us first begin, then, by considering what is the place of endless punishment; what are the means by which this punishment is to be inflicted; and finally who they are, and how many, who are to suffer its torments.—
And first of its PLACE.

CHAPTER I.

OF HELL.

The place of endless punishment is in the English language popularly called *Hell*. This word was anciently very innocent, signifying properly nothing more than a *covered* or *concealed* place, and by special application the *invisible* or *unseen* state, the *place* or *state of the dead*. Thus it accurately corresponded to the Hebrew SHEOL and the Greek HADES, which it was often employed to translate into our common English version

They were all used as the name of an imaginary place supposed by the ancient Hebrews to lie deep under the earth, and to be the common receptacle and abode of all departed spirits, whether good or bad. But in process of time *hell* has gradually become the most fearful word in human language. It is now the proper name of what has been euphoniously called "the world of wo," the everlasting abode of damned souls, the scene of future indescribable and interminable torments!

Some have curiously, though perhaps unwisely, inquired *when this place was made*. It is not mentioned among the other works of creation, and seems to have formed no part of "the heavens and the earth" created by God in the beginning. But no argument against its existence, surely can be inferred from this silence, though we might perhaps be justified in concluding from this circumstance that it does not belong to this system. Some have supposed that hell was made at a very early period. There are those among the learned Jews who tell us that "there were seven things which were made before the creation of the world," and among these they reckon hell. Indefinite as this piece of information is, and suspicious as its authority may be, it is unfortunately all that we have on the subject, and all probably that, in our present state of ignorance and imperfection, we have any reason to expect.

Others have been far more seriously puzzled by the inquiry *where hell is located*. On this point there have been very various and conflicting opinions. The more ancient doctrine was that *hell is under the earth*. This notion is obviously to be traced to the Scripture representations of *Sheol* and *Hades*, which were uniformly spoken of as *beneath*, or down deep under the surface of the earth. This doctrine was somewhat disturbed by the discovery that the earth is a globe, and many very sincere believers in hell were grievously distressed about its locality. Some of the astronomers, among whom was Whiston, if I mistake not, conjectured that hell might be found in one of the *comets*. Others, among whom was the Rev. Tobias Swinden, believed that hell is located in the *sun*. Modern geological inquiries, which render it probable that the interior of the earth is in a state of fusion and of a very high degree of heat, seem to be bringing some orthodox minds back to the ancient faith, and are persuading them that hell is after all in the centre of our earth. Milton, who is the highest authority on points connected with this subject, has been rather indefinite, and his geography of hell, to say the best of it, is far from being satisfactory. All that we learn from him respecting the locality of hell is that it is at an immeasurable distance downward from "heaven and earth," from which it is separated by the realm of Chaos and Old Night,

"The hoary deep, a dark
Illimitable ocean without bound,
Without dimension; where length, breadth and height,
And time and place are lost."

In this it is but just to say that Milton differs widely from the Jewish Rabbins, who maintain that hell is in the immediate neighborhood of Paradise, nay only "a hand's breadth," and some say only two fingers' breadth, or even "the thickness of a thread from it." I like the modesty of Dr. Trapp, who says,

"The *place* allotted to this scene of woe
We know not."

Though afterwards with all his modesty, he very innocently falls into a little dogmatism on the subject by assuring us that it is at an immeasurable distance from heaven.

"From the empyrean heaven, the blest abode
Of saints in bliss, of angels, and of God,
Most distant sure is hell."

And yet nothing is more certain from the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, than that heaven and hell are so near that people can see and converse with each other across the gulf which separates them. But on this point I shall leave my readers as I found them; and having merely stated the different opinions that have been entertained by the learned, pass lastly to speak of the *magnitude* of hell.

Concerning this there can be little ground for dispute among orthodox christians. If the *size* of

a place may be judged from the number of those who are to occupy it, no one can hesitate to believe that hell is one of the largest and most important parts of the universe. Milton denominates it "a universe of death," and represents it as vast beyond all that "an angel's ken" can comprehend. Modern divines, as I have before remarked, significantly call it a "world of wo." The Jewisha Rbbins tell us that hell is so large that it would take a man three hundred years to pass through it. All this is sufficiently indefinite, it must be confessed, and yet it is all well calculated to give us a notion of its vastness.

But all these are questions of mere curiosity compared with what relates to the nature of hell and the kinds and degrees of punishment there inflicted. And here I must say that all the powers of human language and imagination have been exhausted in setting forth the multiplied torments and horrors of that "world of wo," that "universe of death." I shall therefore devote to this part of my subject an entire chapter.

CHAPTER II.

OF HELL'S HORRORS.

This, I need not remark, is a very important chapter—important both to those who receive the dogma of endless punishment, and those who re-

ject it. The former must rely upon the horrors of hell to give weight and moral power to their favorite doctrines, while the latter can hardly fail to find in those horrors a most convincing proof of its falsehood and absurdity. And it is a curious fact, deserving the attention of both friends and foes, that just in proportion as hell's horrors are heightened, must they appear the more absurd and impossible. Hence it happens that in the present age, and especially in this country, those who most effectually preach the endless torments of hell, may justly be regarded as those who are also doing most to bring the doctrine into disrepute. I am thoroughly persuaded that nothing would so soon and so effectually destroy all faith in endless punishment, as particular and terrific descriptions of its torments. It is much to be regretted, therefore, that the advocates of that doctrine should be so exceedingly cautious in exhibiting its true character, and most of all that they should so generally shun all descriptions of the various miseries of the popular hell. Formerly it was not so. Formerly orthodox divines did not hesitate to pronounce the name of hell in "ears polite," nor to portray its horrors in the most vivid manner. But among the other improvements of the age, hell itself seems to be undergoing some modifications. It is growing more tolerable every year. What the end of this is to be, I need not foretell. It requires no spirit of prophecy to

see that it must completely deprive hell of its power, and leave it a mere name.

It was the opinion of Cardinal Bellarmine, if I mistake not, that a view of hell, for the space of five minutes, would strike such a terror into the most desperate sinner as to produce his immediate conversion. Now, although God has refused this healing vision to mortals, still something may be done by lively descriptions of the place and its various horrors. The old divines, therefore, did not judge unwisely when they introduced such representations of hell as they thought most likely to terrify men and lead them to repentance. Having assumed that fear is the proper motive to act upon the human heart in such cases, I can see no impropriety in employing all kinds of description, and every form of illustration, which are calculated to excite a vivid conception of hell torments. On the contrary, they seem to me not only called for, but indispensably necessary to any tolerable success in working repentance and reformation in our fellow men. Why is it, then, that they are permitted to fall into so general disrepute? Why is it that they are employed so seldom, except by a very small class of fire-brand preachers, who go flaming about like "wandering stars," to be gazed at by the multitude for a season, and then pass away unloved and unrespected, and are forgotten forever?

In what I am about to offer on the subject of

hell's horrors, I shall indulge in no speculations of my own, but shall confine myself to the opinions entertained by orthodox writers. I may add, that I shall endeavor always to state these opinions in the very language of the advocates of the doctrine of endless punishment. This will be done, sometimes in prose, and sometimes in verse, for men have *sung* as well as *said* the horrors of that place of wrath and torment! And for the clearer exhibition of the facts in the case, I shall present the subject under several minor divisions.

1. *Brief but general description.*

As I have before observed, Prof. Stuart euphoni-ously calls hell the "world of wo." This is, perhaps, rather a name than a description, but it at the same time gives a fearful notion of that "universe of death." The venerable Christian Stock tells us that hell is "a place where the damned will be racked and tormented forever." Cardinal Hugo goes somewhat farther, and says "hell is a boundless and bottomless lake, full of incomparable heat, an intolerable stench and innumerable pains; there is misery, there is darkness, there is no order, there is eternal horror, there is no hope of good, no avoiding of evil." Erasmus Franciscus is still better; "Hell," says he, "is the abyss of torment; the scene of the racks and pains of eternal, penal justice; the pit of everlasting death; the hall of mourning; the house of ceaseless lamentation of heaven-lost souls; the

glowing cage of spiritual lions and bears, to wit, of devilish-minded men; the burning furnace of burning tares! Hell is an eternal prison, and at the same time a place of eternal execution to the prisoners; a sty of goats and swine; a flayer's cart for dead spiritual dogs; a carrion pit for all those who go thither, like a brute, without repentance; it is a place wherein scorpions, snakes and dragons, to wit, spirits creep around and look continually upon the damned fire-brands of hell! It is a wilderness full of fiery serpents, but in which there is no brazen serpent to be lifted up, for the healing of those that are bitten." Cyril describes hell as "the land of death wherein is no life; the realm of darkness wherein is no light; the gulf of sorrow wherein is no joy, where the reprobates all sigh forever, and still find no ear that is moved by pity to hear; an abyss where they all cry out in lamentable misery, and still meet no one who can be touched with compassion; where they all pray, and yet no one hears or saves; there they are all lost and have no comforter at all."

Watson, in his Body of Divinity, speaks of hell as "the very accent and emphasis of misery. There," says he, "is judgment without mercy. O, what flames of wrath, what seas of vengeance, what rivers of brimstone are poured out there upon the heads of the damned!" Calvin, whose mind and heart, it is well known, were none of the

gentlest, says, "As no description can equal the severity of the divine vengeance on the reprobates, their anguish and torment are figuratively represented to us under corporeal images; as darkness and gnashing of teeth, unextinguishable fire, a worm incessantly gnawing the heart. For there can be no doubt but that by such modes of expression, the Holy Ghost intended to confound all our faculties with horror. Wherefore miserable consciences find no repose, but are harrassed and agitated with a dreadful tempest, feel themselves torn asunder by an angry God, and transfixed and penetrated with mortal stings; are terrified at the thunderbolts of God, and broken by the weight of his hand; so that to sink into any gulfs and abysses would be more tolerable than to stand a moment in these terrors. How great then to endure the never-ceasing effects of his wrath!"

The general views expressed in the preceding quotations, are incorporated into some if not all of our popular orthodox creeds and catechisms. Thus we are taught in the Presbyterian Catechism that "the punishment of sin, in the world to come, is everlasting separation from the comfortable presence of God, and most grievous torments in both soul and body without intermission, in hell-fire forever." But I must pass to some more particular descriptions of hell and its horrors. They will be rich, and to many of my

readers, I hope, of singular edification and comfort.

It may be well for me, before entering farther upon this subject, to remark that divines have distinguished the punishments of hell into two distinct kinds. 1. *Pœna Sensus*; and 2. *Pœna Damni*, i. e. punishments of sense, and punishments of loss. By the punishments of sense are meant all the pains and tortures of a physical kind which the damned shall suffer; while by the latter are signified all the miseries resulting from the consciousness of what they have lost by their exclusion from heaven, its glories and happiness, attended as it must ever be by shame and confusion of face, tribulation and anguish of mind. I shall first consider that part of endless punishment, known by the name of Pains of Sense.

2. *Hell Fire.*

It is a commonly received opinion that hell is filled with material fires. This has sometimes been denied or doubted by a few of the more speculative believers and advocates of hell torments, but the notion of literal fire and brimstone in hell is too deeply fixed in the minds of the multitude to admit of being easily shaken. The Rev. Tobias Swinden, whom I have before mentioned, has a long chapter designed to prove "that the fire of hell is not metaphorical but real;" and he quotes a great number of orthodox authorities in his favor. Nothing is more certain, I suppose,

than that the vast majority of believers in endless punishment have also believed most fully in the materiality of its fires. The ancient Fathers have spoken very plainly on this subject, as well as their modern disciples. St. Cyprian says that "those fires shall live, and the unconsuming flame shall lick the naked body." And again, "The miserable bodies of the damned shall fry and burn in those flames." Tertullian was of the same opinion, and so also was Jerome. Origen was reckoned erroneous for thinking the fires of hell *inward*, rather than outward, and to act upon the conscience rather than the body. Zanchius, a modern but learned divine, tells us, that "it is without question that not only the souls of the wicked, but also their bodies shall suffer torment from this fire : and therefore the fire must be such as may work upon their bodies, and inflict on them a far greater pain than our fire doth impress on us. What quality soever it shall be of, it seemeth it shall be altogether a corporeal creature which may operate upon bodies and torment them." So Dr. Barrow, of the Church of England teaches, that "in the state of everlasting death, our bodies shall be afflicted continually by a sulphureous flame." But I need not quote authorities on a point of this nature, though I cannot deny myself the use of a few lines of poetry from a learned English divine, Dr. Joseph Trapp.

"Fire too must make the *sensible* of hell :
With everlasting burnings who can dwell ?

Tormenting Tophet is ordained long since;
 Ev'n for the *king*, the potentate, the prince,
 It is prepared: 'Tis roomy, vast, and wide,
 With store of fuel plenteously supplied:
 The breath of God makes the full furnace boil;
 And, like a stream of brimstone fires the pile.
 Doomed to live death and never to expire,
 In floods, and whirlwinds of tempestuous fire,
 The damned shall groan; fire of all kinds and forms;
 In rain, and hail, in hurricanes and storms;
 Liquid and solid, livid, red and pale;
 A flaming mountain here, and there a flaming vale.
 The liquid fire makes seas; the solid shores;
 Arch'd o'er with flames the horrid concave roars.
 All Hell is Fire—above, beside, below,
 Fires or in hard metallic substance glow
 Or spout in cataracts, or in rivers flow.
 In bubbling eddies rolls the fiery tide
 And sulphurous surges on each other ride.
 The hollow, winding vaults, and dens, and caves,
 Bellow like furnaces with flaming waves.
 Pillars of flame in spiral volumes rise
 Like fiery snakes, and lick the infernal skies.
 Sulphur, the eternal fuel, unconsumed,
 Vomits redounding smoke, thick, unillumed."

It may well be doubted, I think, whether any
 one ever exhibited fire in more various shapes, or
 put it to more diverse uses, in prose or verse,
 than Dr. Trapp has here succeeded in doing. It
 is a passage worthy of a far greater poet than he
 could justly claim to be. Milton, too, employs
 fire as one of the elements of hell.

"A dungeon horrible on all sides round
 As one great furnace flamed."

So also Pollock makes hell a place of fire.
 When seen from without,

“Suddenly before my eye
A wall of fiery adamant sprung up—
Wall mountainous, tremendous, flaming high
Above all flight of hope.”

The interior he describes thus :

“ Wide was the place
And deep as wide, and ruinous as deep.
Beneath I saw a lake of burning fire
With tempest tost perpetually, and still
The waves of fiery darkness 'gainst the rocks
Of dark damnation broke, and music made
Of melancholy sort.”

These fires of hell are represented as unspeakably more fierce, penetrating and terrible than any fires on earth. Bp. Jeremy Taylor calls it “that penetrating and real fire, of which this temporal fire is but a painted fire in respect of that in hell.” “We are amazed,” says he, “to think of the inhumanity of Phalaris, who roasted men in his brazen bull: this was joy in respect of that fire of hell which penetrates the very entrails of the body without consuming them. Amongst all the torments which human justice hath invented for the punishment of crimes, there is none held more rigorous than that of fire, by reason of the great activity of that element. What shall the heat of that fire be which shall be the executioner of the justice of the God of vengeance! whose zeal shall be inflamed against the wicked, and shall kindle the fire which shall eternally burn in the extremities of hell? Such are the torments and miseries of hell, that if all the

trees in the world were put in one heap, and set on fire, I would rather burn there till the day of judgment, than suffer for the space of one hour that fire of hell!" This reminds me of a declaration made by one of our modern revivalists, that if one of the damned were to be taken from hell, and placed in the midst of the hottest anthracite coal fire it is possible to make, he would freeze to death in an instant! I need not say that such a fire will leave no part of the unhappy wretches exposed to its flames unaffected. The advocates of endless punishment have not failed to perceive and insist upon. The learned and eloquent Bishop quoted just above says, "The burning of a finger only does cause so great a torment that it is insufferable; but far greater were it to burn the whole arm; and far greater were it besides the arms to burn the legs; and far more violent would it be to burn the whole body. This torment [of hell] cannot be expressed, since it comprises as many torments as the body of man hath joints, sinews, arteries, etc." Dr. Barrow speaks of the sulphureous flame of hell as "not only scorching the skin, but piercing the inmost sinews." Drexelius, speaking of the Rich Man in hell says, "he now lies frying in the flames."

But this intolerable fire of hell possesses some very strange and wonderful qualities. In the first place, it gives no light. This is laid down

by all writers on the subject, whether poetic or prose. Milton says.

“ Yet from those flames
No light, but rather darkness visible,
Served only to discover sights of wo,
Regions of sorrow. . .

Prosper speaks of seeing “no light in that fire, but to feel that it burneth.” So also does Gregory discourse. “In hell,” says the pious Matthew Henry, “there is fire but no light; it is *utter darkness*; darkness in extremity; the highest degree of darkness, without any remainder, or mixture, or hope of light; nor the least gleam or glimpse of it.”

But what is far more wonderful than this is a restoring quality which hell-fire possesses, so that while it is eternally consuming what it acts upon, it is at the same time miraculously preserving and recreating it. Tertullian tells us that “as the philosophers know the difference between the secret fire and common fire; so that fire is of one kind which we make use of, and that of another which serveth the judgment of God, whether it pierce or strike through the clouds of heaven in thunder, or break out of the earth through the tops of mountains. For this doth not consume what it burneth, but repaireth what it preyeth upon; so that the mountains remain which always burn, and he that is struck with fire from heaven is not to be reduced to ashes by other fire. And this may be

a testimony of the eternal fire; this, one example, of that fire which continually nourisheth and preserveth those that are punished in it. The mountains burn and endure, and why not the guilty and enemies of God?"

Pollock has borrowed and perhaps beautified the same pleasing thought in his *Course of Time*. He says,

"Through all that dungeon of unfading fire
I saw most miserable beings walk,
Burning continually, yet unconsumed;
Forever wasting, yet enduring still;
Dying perpetually, yet never dead."

3. *Pains suffered by the sense of sight.*

Having spoken of the fire of hell and the torments to be endured through its action upon the sense of feeling, I must now consider what tortures are inflicted through the sense of sight. And here I must apprise my unlearned readers that *utter darkness*, so far from being a bar to the vision in hell, only adds to its power and multiplies the frightful objects on which it must forever rest. Bp. Jeremy Taylor says, "The eyes shall not only be grieved with a scorching heat, but shall be tormented with monsters and horrible figures; many are affrighted very much, passing through a church-yard, only for fear of seeing a fantasm; in what a fright will be a miserable, damned soul, which shall see so many, and of so horrid shapes! Their sight also shall be torment-

ed with beholding the punishment of their friends and kindred. Hegesippus writes that Alexander, the son of Hyrcanus, resolving to punish certain persons with exemplary rigor, caused eight hundred to be crucified; and whilst they were yet alive, caused their wives and children to be murdered before their eyes; that so they might not die once, but many deaths! This rigor shall not be wanting in hell, where fathers shall see their sons, and brothers their brothers, tormented. To the sight of those dreadful apparitions shall be added the horror and fearful darkness of the place. The darkness of Egypt was said to be horrible, because the Egyptians beheld fearful figures and phantasms which terrified them. In the like manner, in that infernal darkness, the eye shall be tormented with the monstrous figures of the wicked spirits, which shall appear much more dreadful by reason of the obscurity and sadness of that eternal night." So Milton represents the darkness of hell as "darkness visible" which seems only

"To discover sights of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades where peace
And rest can never dwell."

But Dr. Trapp transcends all others in describing this point of theology.

"For all that mass of fire projects no light,
But darkness visible, and glaring night;
Which to the eye serves only to reveal
Sad scenes of woe, and add affright to hell:

Pale phantoms, hideous spectres, shapes which scare
 The damned themselves, and terrify despair.
 'Gorgons and Harpys, and Chimeras dire,'
 And swarms of twisted serpents, hissing fire."

4. *Punishments suffered through the sense of hearing.*

"The hearing," says Bp. Jeremy Taylor,
 "shall not only be afflicted by an intolerable pain,
 caused by that ever-burning and penetrating fire,
 but also with the fearful and amazing noises of
 thunders, howlings, clamors, groans, curses, and
 blasphemies. . . . What shall be the harmo-
 ny of hell, where the ears shall be deafened with
 the cries and complaints of the damned! What
 confusion and horror shall it breed to hear all
 lament, all complain, all curse and blaspheme,
 through the bitterness of the torments which they
 suffer! But the damned shall principally be
 affrighted, and shall quake, to hear the thunder-
 clap of God's wrath, which shall continually re-
 sound in their ears."

So Dr. Trapp hears nothing in hell but

"Clattering of iron, and the clank of chains;
 The clang of lashing whips; shrill shrieks, and
 groans,
 Loud, ceaseless howlings, cries, and piercing moans.

— Despair, despair, despair!
 Is still the sound that breaks the dusky air.
 Forever! Never! Never be released?
 Oh no! 'Tis torment *never* to be eased."

Dr. Young also makes a damned soul speak
 of hell as a place

"Where shrieks, the roaring flame, the rattling chain,
And all the dreadful eloquence of pain
Our only good!"

So the good Christopher Love tells us "the ear shall be tormented with the yellings and hideous outcries of the damned."

Even the music in hell is rather melancholy, according to Pollock, who tells us that,

"The waves of fiery darkness, 'gainst the rocks
Of dark damnation broke, and music made
Of melancholy sort, and over head
And all around, wind warred with wind, storm
howled
To storm and lightning, forked lightning crossed
And thunder answered thunder, muttering sounds
Of sullen wrath."

And thus speaks Christopher Love again,
"Their cursings are their hymns, howlings their tunes, and blasphemies their ditties." Odd music certainly!

5. Pains to be suffered through the sense of smell.

"The smell," says Bp. Jeremy Taylor, "shall also be tormented with the most pestilential stink. Horrible was that torment used by Mezentius, to tie a living body to a dead, and then to leave them, until the infection and putrified exhalations of the dead had killed the living. What can be more abominable than for a living man to have his mouth laid close to that of a dead one, full of grubs and worms, where the living must receive

all those pestilential vapors breathed forth from a corrupt carcase, and suffer such loathsomeness and abominable stink? But what is this in respect to hell, when each body of the damned is more loathsome and unsavory than a million of dead dogs, and all these pressed and crowded together in so strait a compass? Bonaventure goes so far as to say that if one only of the damned were brought into this world, it were sufficient to infect the whole earth. Neither shall the devils send forth a better smell. . . . Hell is the world's sink, and the receptacle of all the filth in this great frame, and withal a deep dungeon, where the air hath no access. How great must the stink and infection needs be of so many corruptions heaped one upon another! and how insufferable the smell of that infernal brimstone mixed with so many corrupted matters! O gulf of horror! O infernal grave! without vent or breathing place! Eternal grave of such as die continually and cannot die, with what abominable filth art thou filled!" Milton, too, does not fail to speak of the "stench and smoke" of hell.—But not to dwell on this point longer, I pass to consider,

6. *The pains suffered through the sense of taste.*

"What then shall I say of the tongue," exclaims Bp. Jeremy Taylor, "which is the instrument of so many ways of sinning, flattery, lying, murmuring, calumniating, gluttony, and drunken-

ness! Who can express that bitterness, which the damned shall suffer, greater than that of aloes and wormwood? The Scripture tells us, the gall of dragons shall be their wine; and they shall taste the poison of asps for all eternity, unto which shall be joined an intolerable thirst, and dog-like hunger. . . . Famine is the most pressing of all necessities, and most deformed of all evils: plagues and wars are happiness in respect to it. . . . If hunger be so terrible a mischief in this life, how will it afflict the damned in the other! Without all doubt, the damned would rather tear themselves in pieces than suffer it; all the most horrible famines that Scripture histories propose unto us, are but weak pictures to that which the damned suffer in this unfortunate residence of eternal miseries; neither shall thirst torment them the less."

Drexelius takes the same view of the subject. Speaking of the Rich Man in hell, he says, "How strangely is his condition altered! Instead of a lofty bed of down, on which he was wont to repose himself, he now lies frying in the flames: his sparkling wine and delicious dainties are taken from him; he is burnt up with thirst, and has nothing for his food but smoke and sulphur!"

Thus all the bodily senses are to be perpetually tormented in that

"Universe of death which God by curse
Created evil, for evil only good."

7. Accessory pains and aggravations.

But this is not all. Hell has a great variety of corporeal pains besides those now mentioned.— For instance the damned in hell are to be most horribly *whipped*. “As the slaves of the earth,” says my great authority, Bp. Jeremy Taylor, “are whipped and punished by their masters, so the slaves of hell are tormented by the devils who have power and dominion over them: and who lay upon them a thousand afflictions, griefs, and miseries. Every member of their bodies shall suffer greater pain and torment than if it were torn from the body. If one cannot tell how to suffer a tooth-ache, head-ache, or the pain of the colic, what will it be, when there shall not be any joint or the least part of the body, which shall not cause him an intolerable pain: Not only the head, or teeth, but also the breasts, sides, shoulders, the back, the heart and all parts of the body even to the very bones and marrow.” The pious Isaac Ambrose tells us that under the hands of the devil, “no part shall escape in such a fray:” and he represents those executioners of God’s judgments as using whips of stinging serpents and scorpions! This notion is expressed in verse by Dr. Trapp, to whom I have been so often indebted before.

Meanwhile, as if but light were all these pains,
Legions of devils, bound themselves, in chains.

Tormented, and tormentors, o'er them shake
Thongs, and forked iron, in the burning lake:
Belching infernal flames, and wreathed with spires
Of curling serpents rouse the brimstone fires;
With whips of fiery scorpions scourge their slaves
And in their faces dash the livid waves."

Pollock carries the matter a little further, and represents the damned themselves as engaged in tormenting each other.

Some wandered lonely in the desert flames,
And some in full encounter fiercely met
With curses loud, and blasphemies that made
The cheek of darkness pale: and as they fought
And cursed and gnashed their teeth, and wished to die
Their hollow eyes did utter streams of wo."

But this is not the worst of the case. The wicked are to be *bound in bundles* to burn them. Bp. Jeremy Taylor says "The bodies of the damned, after the judgment past, shall be so straitened and crowded together in that infernal dungeon that the holy Scripture compares them to grapes in a wine-press, which press one another till they burst. Most barbarous was that torment inflicted upon some unfortunate persons: they put certain rings of iron, stuck full of sharp points of needles, about their arms and feet, in such manner as they could not move without pricking and wounding themselves; then they compassed them about with fire, to the end that standing still they might be burnt alive; and if they stirred the sharp points pierced their flesh with more intolerable pains than the fire. What then

shall be the torment of the damned, when they shall lie eternally without dying and without possibility of removing from the place designed them?" Mr. Ambrose tells us that the damned shall be packed like brick in a kiln, and be so bound that they cannot move a limb, nor even the eye-lid: and while thus fixed the Almighty shall blow the fires of hell through and through them, forever! On this beautiful thought both Jeremy Taylor and Mr. Ambrose expatiate at considerable length. And it cannot be doubted that this fixedness of the body would of itself prove an intolerable punishment. To stand in the pillory for a single hour occasions horrible pain. What then must it be to lie thus immovably fixed in hell forever and ever? Besides, Matthew Henry tells us that "sinners of the same sort will be bundled together in the great day; a bundle of atheists, a bundle of epicures, and a great bundle of hypocrites. Those who have been associated in sin, will be so in shame and sorrow, and it will be an aggravation of their misery."

Before leaving this part of the subject, I must call the attention of my readers to a very great improvement in hell's horrors, too little known and too seldom insisted upon among the multitude, but exhibited very clearly by some of the learned. I allude to the sudden and frequent transitions in hell, from *extreme heat* to *extreme cold*, which as may well be imagined, must

add immeasurably to the torments of the damned. This beautiful thought may seem to have been drawn from the *gnashing*, or as Dr. Adam Clark says *chatteriag* of the teeth, mentioned in the Gospels; though Jeremy Taylor evidently takes it from a passage of the Vulgate of Job, which he translates: "They shall pass from extremity of cold to intolerable heats." The Hindoos, though not remarkable for their refinement, believe, as appears from the Institutes of Menu, that the wicked shall "suffer alternate afflictions from extremities of cold and heat." Milton has not failed to exhibit this trait of hell's horrors.

"Beyond this flood, a frozen continent
Lies dark and wild, beat with perpetual storms
Of whirlwind and dire hail, which on firm land
Thaws not, but gathers heap, and ruin seems
Of ancient pile; all else deep snow and ice,
A gulf profound.

The parching air
Burns froze, and cold performs the effect of fire.
Thither by harpy-footed furies haled,
At certain revolutions all the damned
Are brought; and feel by turns the bitter change
Of fierce extremes—extremes by change more fierce—
From beds of raging fire, to starve in ice
Their soft ethereal warmth and then to pine
Immoveable infixed, and frozen round
Periods of time, thence hurried back to fire."

But not to dwell longer on these varied torments, let it be remembered that they are inconceivably more severe than any it is possible to suffer, or even to imagine, in the present life. On

this point all good orthodox writers are fully agreed. Drexelius, and also Jeremy Taylor, both refer to numerous instances of barbarous and inhuman punishments inflicted by some of the worst tyrants that ever lived, and yet maintain that they are nothing in comparison with the punishments of hell. Take a single case introduced by Drexelius. "We read," says he, "in the history of Paulus Jovius, that Actiolinus, the tyrant of Padua, had several loathsome, horrible prisons, which were so infamous for the great variety of tortures which were exercised therein, that they who were cast into them, looked upon death as their greatest happiness; the sooner he came the more welcome he was to those miserable wretches. They were laden with irons; starved with hunger, poisoned with stench, eaten up with vermin; in this manner they died a lingering death, that they might perceive themselves to die. He was justly accounted the happiest among them, who died the soonest; and indeed their punishment was worse than death; vast heaps of dead bodies lay putrifying together, which was so dismal and noisome a spectacle that it might truly be affirmed without a figure that the dead were the destruction of the living. But the worst of those prisons," says the good Drexelius, "is a kind of Paradise in respect to hell."

The same author lays down the following

statement. "If," says he, "all the severest and most barbarous tortures which were ever invented by the tyrants of the earth, who by anxious thoughts, and hellish contrivances, improved and refined the art of cruelty and brought it to perfection; if these, I say, were to be heaped upon the head of one man, and he was to endure them for a hundred years, yet they would not come near the pains of the damned even for one day!!"

It is not remarkable, considering the nature and intensity of these sufferings of hell, that even the advocates of these horrors should sometimes be forced to ask, how it is possible for human beings to endure them, I will not say for eternity, but even for a single year. We have before seen that some as Tertullian and Pollock give to hell-fire a peculiar property by which it burns without destroying the object burned. To solve this difficult problem, in another way, Drexelius refers to the well known *asbestos* which, says he, being once set on fire, burneth continually," and also to a certain kind of flax, unknown I suspect to modern naturalists, "which, so far from being consumed by fire, is washed and cleansed by it." But these do not furnish by any means so apposite an illustration of the subject in hand as he finds in that creature of popular superstition, the *salamander*! "This creature," says the

good natured divine, "is generated of showers and consequently of a very cold nature; the sun or drought immediately kills it: according to Pliny it lives in the fire like ice; of its skin can be made lights for perpetual lamps, which are always burning. The good God who created the salamander, out of earth and clay, from the very same matter gave being unto man, but he endued him with a nobler nature. . . . But man by his wickedness has made himself such a *salamander*, who must always live or always die in flames eternal." Augustine seems to think this rather miraculous; "I have before disputed," says he, "that animals may live even in fire, in burning without being consumed, in pain without dissolution, by the miraculous appointment of our Almighty Creator. And he who denieth that this is possible with him, knoweth not who it is that doeth every thing that is wonderful in all natures." Nothing can be more obvious than the fact that to preserve men in the torments of hell must require the immediate power of God.

Rev. John Whitaker, in his work on Death, Judgment, Heaven and Hell, tells us that when the damned are cast into hell "they find their bodies now fitted for the first time to resist all the consuming powers of fire, but are as much alive as ever to all the painful violences of it. Their bodies are now, as our Saviour declared they

should be, 'all salted with fire;' all so tempered and prepared, as to burn the more fiercely and yet never consume." The pious Dr. Goodwin says, "in hell their bodies shall be nealed (as we speak of glass) that they may endure this fire."

Most men will be inclined to hope that I have now exhausted my subject, and exhibited Hell's Horrors in so many different lights, and in so bold relief, as to beget in every candid mind the suspicion of their reality. And it must be confessed, I believe, that these torments wear the aspect of fictions as truly as any ever described by pagans, whether of ancient or modern times. Nay, it may well be doubted whether they are not to be traced to purely heathen sources.

But let not my readers suppose that I have yet done. The various torments to which I have now called attention, make but the lightest part of endless punishment. For hitherto I have confined myself to the *poena sensus*, the punishment of sense, or the merely outward and physical pains to be inflicted upon the bodies of the damned.—Nor have I by any means mentioned all of these, for as that pious and faithful man of God, Christopher Love, says, "there is a variety of these torments; there is not one way, a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand to torment you." Without stopping, then, to describe so vast a number of tortures, let us pass to the consideration of the second class of punishments, viz. the *poena damni*,

the punishments of loss, including all the pains and torments of both mind and conscience, and all the varied miseries of a more spiritual kind which the damned are represented as suffering in the world of wo.

This class of miseries, it must be confessed, do not strike the vulgar mind so forcibly as those called punishments of sense, and hence have not been so carefully traced out and fully exhibited. Most men have better conceptions of the wants and pains of the body than they have of what belongs more peculiarly to the soul itself. Hence descriptions of mere physical suffering are generally much more intelligible and impressive than any that pertain exclusively to our intellectual and moral nature. Still certain orthodox writers have mentioned, if they have not so fully described, these inward torments, and I shall follow them as well as I can, in exhibiting the more refined and spiritual horrors of hell.

8. *The pains consequent upon the loss of God.*

"In hell," says Bp. Jeremy Taylor, "is the pain of loss, and that so rigorous, that in depriving the damned soul of only one thing, they take from it all good things; for they deprive him of God in whom they are all comprised. . . . God is the greatest good, and it is, therefore, the greatest evil to be deprived of him, because evil is the privation of good; and that is to be esteemed the greatest evil which is the privation of the greatest

good, which is God; and must certainly, therefore, cause more grief and resentment in the damned than all the punishments and torments of the damned besides; and in regard there is in hell eternal privation of God, who is the chief good; the pains of loss, whereby one is deprived forever of the greatest of all goods, this privation will cause the greatest pain and torment." So Mr. Swinden reckons among the punishments of hell, "an eternal separation from God." "The sinner's memory," says Dr. Whitby, "reflecting on this punishment of loss, will create fresh and never-ceasing torments. It will torment him to remember what an inestimable blessing he hath lost in losing the enjoyment of that God who is the chiefest good." So Dr. Adam Clarke tells us that a part of everlasting destruction consists "in being banished *from the presence of the Lord*, excluded from his approbation forever. . . . Never to see the face of God throughout eternity is a heart-rending, soul-appalling thought."—The wicked in hell, says the pious Christopher Love, "they are deprived of and banished from the favorable presence of God." "And here," says Chrysostom, "if there were a thousand worlds, the loss of the favor of one God is more than a thousand worlds; it is the greatest torment of a damned man that he is without God.—The presence of God makes heaven to be heaven. The absence of God makes hell more hell than it

is. *Depart from me ye cursed ; this is the great torment of the damned that they must depart from God and Jesus Christ forever The loss of God is the greatest loss that may be, and this is your loss that are cast into hell."*

9. *The pains consequent upon the loss of Heaven.*

"Though the wicked are not sensible in this life what it is to fall short of heaven," says the Rev. Mr. Swinden, "yet at their death, after the separation of soul and body, the eye of the understanding shall be opened ; and they shall then clearly discern what it is to be shut out of the kingdom of heaven, to be deprived of the beatific vision, and to lose the fruition of all the glory, splendor and blessedness of it. They shall then, to no purpose, incessantly cry, *Lord, Lord, open unto us.*" It needs no illustration, I hope, to make it appear that the loss of heaven with all its glories and felicity, must greatly aggravate the miseries of hell. This circumstance is, therefore, always insisted upon by those who attempt any general description of the world of wo. The damned in hell will see heaven, we are told, but will see it afar off, as the Rich Man saw Lazarus. They will also be sensible that it was once within their reach, and that they might have shared its bliss, but they would not. And now, alas ! it is too late. "And if Tully did so bewail his banishment, in being banished from Italy," says Christo-

Phar Lave, "that every time he looked toward Italy he fell a weeping; and if Demosthenes took his banishment from Athens so heavily, that every time he looked that way, he fell a weeping; if this did grieve them so much, how will the thoughts of this, that you are banished from *heaven* grieve you, if ever it should be your dismal lot to be cast into hell?" To this add what Jeremy Taylor says, "What a grief it will be to see themselves deprived of the palaces of heaven, the society of saints, and that happy country of the living, where all is peace, charity and joy; where all shines, all pleases, and all parts resound with hallelujahs! If the damned had no other punishment than to see themselves banished amongst devils, into a place not far distant from heaven, dark as night, without the sight or comfort of sun or moon for all eternity, it were a torment insufferable."

10. *The pains arising from a guilty conscience.*

"There is another hell," says Mr. Swinden, "in the midst of hell. . . There the wicked shall be exposed to the intolerable anguish of an enraged conscience, the remorse of which shall continually prey upon them for what they have done in their lives-time." "Wherefore, miserable consciences," says Calvin, "find no repose, but are harassed and agitated with a dreadful tempest, feel themselves torn asunder by an angry God, and

transfixed and penetrated by mortal stings; are terrified by the thunderbolts of God, and broken by the weight of his hand, so that to sink into any gulfs and abysses would be more tolerable than to stand for a moment in these terrors." Dr. Dwight maintains that "sin, in the world of misery, will be viewed as it is"; so that the damned themselves shall both see and acknowledge the heinousness of their guilt, and the infinite rectitude of the divine procedure. He says, also, that the "impenitent in the future world will be subjects of extreme remorse of conscience. The character of every such man, being seen by himself as it is, will of course be loathed, abhorred and despised"; while the view he takes of his own conduct, in connexion with the divine goodness and government, "will overwhelm him with self-condemnation, and pierce his soul with the anguish of self-reproach." "Besides these miseries and calamities," says Jeremy Taylor, "in this power of the soul [the understanding] is engendered the worm of conscience; which is so often proposed unto us in the holy Scripture, as a most terrible torment, and greater than that of fire. Only in one sermon, Christ, our Redeemer, three times menaces us with *the worm which gnaws the consciences, and tears in pieces the hearts of the damned*, admonishing us that their worm shall never die, and their fire be quenched! For as the worm which breeds in dead flesh, or that which breeds in

woods, eats and gnaws that substance of which they are engendered ; so the worm which is bred from sin is in perpetual enmity with it, gnawing and devouring the heart of the sinner with raging and desperate grief. . . . It is a hell in hell worse than a thousand hells ! !”

But of all authors, Pollock has, perhaps, best succeeded in describing the horrors of a guilty conscience.

“I paused and looked ;
And saw, where'er I looked upon that mound,
Sad figures traced in fire ; not motionless,
But imitating life. One I remarked
Attentively ; but how shall I describe
What nought resembles else my eye hath seen ?
Of worm or serpent kind it something looked,
But monstrous with a thousand snaky heads,
Eyed each with double orbs of glaring wrath ;
And with as many tails, that twisted out
In horrid convulsion, tipped with stings ;
And all its mouths, that wide and darkly gaped,
And breathed most poisonous breath, had each a
sting.

Forked, and long, and venomous, and sharp.
And in its writhings infinite it grasped,
Malignantly what seemed a heart, swollen, black,
And quivering with torture most intense.
And still the heart with anguish throbbing high,
Made effort to escape, but could not, for
However it turned, and oft it vainly turned,
These complicated foldings held it fast.
And still the monstrous beast, with sting of head
Or tail transfixed it, bleeding evermore.
What this could image, much I searched to know,
And while I strove, and gazed, and wondered long,
A voice, from whence I knew not, for no one

I saw, distinctly whispered in my ear
These words : *This is the worm that never dies !* "

11. *Pains inflicted on the damned by their own malevolent passions.*

The damned in hell are represented as being filled with all evil passions, such as envy, malice, etc. which shall almost infinitely aggravate their miseries. These passions, we are told, " will be exceedingly powerful in the future world," and increase perpetually in strength. Besides, there will be nothing in the world of wo to restrain such passions, or mitigate in the least degree their pernicious influence. In hell the damned will be filled with the greatest envy. They will behold the happiness of the righteous in heaven, and this shall greatly increase their own misery. When the Rich Man sees poor Lazarus in Abraham's bosom enjoying its comforts and beatitude, it will add immeasurably to his own torments in hell.— " The sight of the saints' glory," says Matthew Henry, " will be a great aggravation of the sinner's misery." " The envy, also," says Jeremy Taylor, " which they bear towards those who have gained heaven by as small matters as they have lost it, shall much add to their grief."—" What a mass of wo," says Dr. Dwight, " must exist in the pangs of immortal envy !"

But it is not envy alone that shall torment the wicked in hell. They will also be filled with the

deepest malice. Hatred, without losing its character or its effect upon him who indulges it, will in a manner become the element of their life.— They will hate universally. They will hate God, they will hate the blessed in heaven, and the damned in hell. Hence they will become, as Dr. Dwight tells us, “the means of extreme suffering to each other. . . . None will have favors to bestow, nor a native amiableness of character, to invite esteem or love. Nor will any restraint operate so as to prevent the heart from emptying out all its wickedness in the open day. Contempt, therefore, deceit and hatred will occupy the whole soul, and dictate all the conduct. The rage which here persecutes an enemy to the grave, and laments that it cannot follow him into the invisible world, may there pursue him through eternity.” I need not add that from “these considerations,” as Dr. Dwight concludes, “it is evident that there can be no confidence in the regions of misery. The wretched inhabitants of these regions will know all around them to be enemies and deceivers. Amid the vast multitudes, not an individual will be found, possessed of either natural affection, or benevolence, or sincerity. This will probably be one of the most painful and wearisome, among all the ingredients of future wo. . . . The miserable inhabitants of hell have no God, no Savior, no virtuous friends, no parents, no relatives, before whom they may spread their

calamities with the hope of being heard ; or in whose hearts, or hands, they may find a refuge from the bitterness of wo. . . . Thus, while the inhabitant of that melancholy world looks around him ; when he casts his eyes abroad through the universe ; he will be forced to perceive that it contains no friend to him. In the midst of millions he is alone, and is sure of being loathed, rejected, and shunned by every being in the creation of God. Not a sigh can he breathe ; not a tear can he shed ; not a sorrow can he unfold ; not a prayer can he utter with a hope of being befriended, heard or regarded."

What a picture of desolation and misery !— Alone alone ! In the midst of millions, and yet alone, or with none but enemies and tormentors around. To sigh, and groan, and pray, and weep, and yet to have no one in the wide universe who can pity or even hear ! If there be such a hell as this it is one of the most terrible states to be imagined. It is thus, however, the damned are represented. Hear Pollock.

" Their hollow eyes did utter streams of wo.
And there were groans that ended not, and sighs
That always sighed, and tears that ever wept
And ever fell, but not in mercy's sight.
And sorrow, and repentance, and despair
Among them walked, and to their thirsty lips
Presented frequent cups of burning gall."

But the scene changes again. These feelings of anguish and desolation give place to rage and

madness which hurl themselves at every being in the wide universe. They are filled, as Matthew Henry says, with "an incurable indignation at God, themselves and one another." "The damned in hell," says Christopher Love, "gnash their teeth out of indignation against Jesus Christ."—Thus hell is represented as being filled with *curses* and *blasphemies*. So says Dr. Trapp:

"They fling
Tartarean rage towards heaven, against heaven's king;
Against the Highest fiercely they blaspheme."

So also Pollock:

"And as I listened, I heard these beings curse
Almighty God, and curse the Lamb, and curse
The earth, the resurrection morn."

In short, hell is represented as the abode of all unholy passions in their intensest forms of manifestation, as a scene of unutterable and unrestrained rage, remorse, envy, malice, and blasphemies, and the most horrid oaths and imprecations!

12. *Pains suffered in hell from despair.*

It is a constant doctrine with the advocates of hell torments that a large part of the miseries of the damned arise from a complete despair of any better condition. That is a realm from which hope is utterly excluded. Milton represents it as a region of sorrow,

"Where peace
And rest can never dwell, *hope* never comes
That comes to all."

Dr. Thomas Goodwin tells us that, "hope was

given to reasonable and intelligent natures to be as a breathing hole, in time of misery, to keep up life in such an one to sustain itself. And the reasonable soul being in its duration eternal, and having an eternity of time to run through and sail over, hath this privilege, denied to beasts, to take a prospect or foresight of time, that is yet to come, and if it can spy out any space or spot of time, in which it shall have happiness or ease, or outlive its misery, it will not utterly die; yea, it will harden itself against present misery with this thought *that however it shall not always be thus with me.*— But on the contrary here, by reason of this ability of foresight, it comes to pass, that a wretched soul in hell, viewing, turning over all the leaves of time to eternity, both finds that it shall not outlive its misery, nor yet can find one space or moment of time of freedom or intermission, having forever to do with the living God. And then it dies, and dies again, and sinks into a gulf of despair, for the future, as well as it is swallowed up with a sense of present wrath.” “There they shall be tortured,” says Mr. Swinden, “with an absolute and complete despair of any better condition, or of the least relaxation from their pains, so much as a drop of water to cool their tongues tormented in these flames.” But this is not all.

13. *Pains suffered from fear.*

As the wicked in hell shall be filled with despair, so shall they also with the deepest and most

dreadful fear. Though their present pains shall be intolerable, yet they shall be made constantly to fear still greater torments, and every day shall add something to their miseries. "The nature of fear," says Dr. Goodwin, "is to outstrip a man's misery; and to take them up afore they come, as hopes use to do our comforts. So as by reason thereof it comes to pass that the soul is not only tormented by what it at present feels, but with the thought of all that is to come; which still further strikes the soul through and through." Jeremy Taylor describes this among the pains to be inflicted by the imagination. "If in this life," says he, "the imagination is sometimes so vehement, that it hurts more than real evils; in the other, the torment which it causes will be excessive. . . . If the apprehension of human justice, which hath power only over the body, give so dreadful alarms to the imagination, what will the sense of the darts of the Divine justice do, which are so many instruments of death and burning arrows shot at damned souls?"

The good Bishop just now quoted, describes at length the pains to be inflicted upon the damned by the *will*, the *memory*, the *understanding*, etc. But I must not follow him, nor must I introduce other sources of hell torments, sometimes insisted upon by individual authors. Still there are two or three aggravations which I must mention as they make no unimportant part of Hell's Horrors. And

First. Dr. Goodwin, before quoted, has a whole volume to show that the punishment of sin in hell is caused immediately by the wrath of God. And from this he argues strongly its greater terribleness. "If creatures," he says, "be able, or God by them, to *scourge us with whips*, then God himself immediately with *scorpions*. . . . In hell God draws out all his forces, all his attributes into the field, whereof wrath is the leader and general. . . All in God is turned into fury."

Second. The torments of hell shall be as severe as possible. Some suppose that there will be degrees in the severity of hell torments, falling more or less heavily on sinners according to the number and turpitude of their sins. But it is very difficult to conceive how this can be, while these torments are taken as they are described. Mr. Swinden says that in hell "there is the absence of all good, and the presence of all evil." Can there be any degrees here? So Jeremy Taylor says, "the evils of hell are truly evils, and so purely such that they have no mixture of good; in that place of unhappiness, all is eternal sorrow and complaint; there is no room for comfort, there shall not be the least good which may give ease; nor shall there want a concourse of all evils which may add affliction: no good is to be found there, where all goods are wanting; neither can there be want of any evil, where all evils whatsoever are to be found; and by the want of all good, and

the collection of all evils, every evil is augmented." Can there be here any degrees of punishment? So Dr. Goodwin says, "In hell God's *anger* breaks forth into raging flames of the fiercest fires, that fill every corner, and break out at all the windows of the soul." Can there be any thing worse than this?

Third. These horrible torments of hell are to be suffered *endlessly*. It is this circumstance that is to give emphasis to all hell's horrors. If there were any end to them, they might be borne, but of this, alas! there is no hope; and this seals the despair of the damned! It is this circumstance, too, which constitutes the peculiar *orthodoxy* of the doctrine under consideration. No man can belong to the Catholic Church, or any of her legitimate daughters, if he denies or even doubts the absolute eternity of hell torments. It matters not how sincerely one believes in future punishment, or how severe he supposes it will be, or how long he thinks it will continue. If it be not strictly endless it avails nothing!

Drexelius says, that "if for every sin, or for every hour of a man's life, he was doomed to suffer a year in hell, and no longer, the punishment would be tolerable. Upon such a presumption, men would be tempted to continue in their sins, and I do not at all doubt, but that a great many would never leave them, could they be assured that the torments of the damned would ev-

er have an end." Hence the absolute eternity of punishment must be maintained! And for the same reason must the torments of hell be exhibited in the most horrible aspects; otherwise sinners would not heed them!

Many authors have attempted to give some faint idea of eternity and thus heighten the fears which a description of hell torments is calculated to beget. It is acknowledged that no adequate conception of eternity can be formed. It transcends the power of numbers. Cornelius a Lapide asks, "How long shall the damned burn in hell? Forever. How long is that? Imagine a hundred thousand years; but that is nothing in respect of eternity. Imagine ten hundred thousand years, yea, as many ages; but that also is nothing in respect of eternity. Imagine a thousand millions of years: still they are nothing. Eternity is the same and always will be so. Proceed and number as many more as you can; add millions of millions more, as long as you please, and then suppose the damned to burn in hell all this vast duration. When you have done all this, you have not yet found the beginning of eternity. Imagine again as many millions of millions of years as there are drops in the sea, and you cannot yet come to the beginning of eternity. Such is the duration of that eternity of torments which God hath decreed to the damned in hell!"

Drexeliussays, "Should God say to the damn-

ed, let the earth be covered with the finest sand, and let the world be filled therewith ; let heap be piled upon heap till it reaches up to the highest heavens ; and let an angel every thousand years take a grain from it, and when the whole shall be removed, after so many thousand years as there were grains, I will release you out of hell ; should God, I say, make any such promise to those miserable spirits, what a mighty consolation it would be to them ! How would they exult and rejoice ! Their damnation would seem somewhat easy to them. But alas ! after millions and millions of years, there remain more millions and still more millions, forever and ever !”

Gulielmus Peraklus, “a very learned and religious man,” and withal Bishop of Lyons, adopted this mode of illustration. “Should the damned,” says he, “every day distil from their eyes but one tear only, and should the tears which they thus distil day after day, be preserved in a convenient place, they would at length exceed the vast ocean of waters. The drops of the sea have their number and measure : it is an easy thing for God to say, they are just so many and no more ; but the tears of the damned can never be numbered.”

Another takes this method. He supposes a skin of parchment, in breadth a span, but of sufficient length to encompass the globe : this parchment is filled with figures of 9 so close together

that no space should be left; who can tell this vast number; and yet all this would express no assignable part of eternity.

"Think of the dread amounts of misery," says the Rev. Austin Dickinson, "that must be endured by an incorrigible enemy of God, *increasing forever in guilt and remorse!* Think of the extent of eternity! Oh! send an angel forward on the awful deep, with the speed of lightning, for millions on millions of centuries, and the dread waves of perdition are still rising and rolling beyond!" "Let imagination stretch its wings again," says the late Dr. Griffin, "and follow the excruciated soul through ages of unutterable endurance—through fire intense enough to melt down all the planets. One period after another passes by it as it flies—until it looks back on the first million of years as on a speck in the horizon, and still it hears the tormented soul exclaim, *My agony is just begun!*"

"How dismal it will be when you are under these racking torments," says Dr. Edwards, "to know assuredly that you never, never shall be delivered from them; to have no hope. When you shall wish that you might be turned into nothing, but shall have no hope of it; when you would rejoice, if you might have any relief after you had endured these torments millions of ages, but shall have no hope of it; when after you have worn out the ages of the sun, moon and stars, in your do-

lorous groans and lamentations, without rest, day or night, or one minute's ease, yet you shall have no hope of ever being delivered; when after you have worn out a thousand more such ages, yet you shall have no hope, but shall know that you are not one whit nearer the end of your torments; but that still there are the same groans, the same shrieks, the same doleful cries incessantly to be made by you, and that the smoke of your torment shall still ascend forever and ever; and that your souls, which have been agitated by the wrath of God all this while, will yet exist to bear more wrath; that your bodies, which have been burning and roasting all this while in these glowing flames, yet shall not have been consumed, but will remain to roast through an eternity yet, which shall not have been at all shortened by what shall have been past."

Let this suffice on this head. Sinners in hell are to suffer the torments above described through all eternity! This we are told is "all they are fit for; this is the only use to which God can put them!" Is it to be thought remarkable if the poor sufferers in hell should at length grow weary of thus serving and glorifying God? This leads me,

Fourth. To say that the damned are often represented as seeking, and most ardently praying, to be annihilated.

"Sad cure! for who would lose
Though full of pain, this intellectual being,
Those thoughts that wander through eternity,
To perish rather, swallowed up and lost
In the wide womb of uncreated night,
Devoid of sense and motion?"

All agree in representing the torments of hell as *death*; "a death without death, an end without end," as Jeremy Taylor calls it, "for death shall ever live, and their end never begin." It is "the second death," "eternal death," which Pollock describes in connexion with the *undying worm*, in the following manner.

"Fast by the side of this unsightly thing,
Another was portrayed, more hideous still;
Who sees it once shall wish to see't no more.
Forever undescribed let it remain!
Only this much I may or can unfold—
Far out it thrust a dart that might have made
The knees of terror quake, and on it hung
Within the triple barb, a being pierced,
Through soul and body both; of heavenly make
Original the being seemed, but fallen,
And worn, and wasted with enormous wo.
And still around the everlasting lance
It writhed, convulsed and uttered mimick groans
And tried and wished, and ever tried and wished
To die; but could not die. Oh horrid sight
I trembling gazed, and listened, and heard this voice
Approach my ear, *This is eternal death!*"

No, even the God of *infinite love* and *mercy* will not after uncountable millions and millions of years withdraw his hand and allow his poor miserable creature in hell-fire to die and "be no

more." "God will always punish them, and he cannot torment them enough," says Drexelius, "though their torments will endure to all *Eternity!*" Dr. Young in his "Last Day" represents of the damned saying:

"Oh grant, great God, at least
This one, this slender, almost *no* request;
When I have wept a thousand lives away,
When torment is grown weary of its prey,
When I have raved ten thousand years in fire,
Ten thousand thousands, let me then expire!

Deep anguish! but too late; the hopeless soul,
Bound to the bottom of the burning pool,
Though loth, and even loud blaspheming, owns
He's justly doomed to pour eternal groans;
Inclosed with horrors, and transfixed with pain,
Rolling in vengeance, struggling with his chain;
To talk to fiery tempests, to implore
The raging flame to give its burnings o'er;
To toss, to writhe, to pant beneath his load,
And bear the weight of an offended God!"

Enough; enough! I can pursue the horrible, the sickening subject no further. I can only pray the Father of mercies and God of all grace, to forgive the ravings of his creatures above quoted. They seem to me not merely horrid but blasphemous. What is the whole tone and teaching of these quotations—and I could give volumes of the like from accredited orthodox writers—but that God can be and will be worse, more revengeful, more cruel, more implacable, than all the tyrants and monsters in human form, who have made earth a hell, and filled it with lamentation

and misery. Imagine the worst punishment you can, surround it with all the circumstances of horror you can conceive, heighten it by every possible aggravation, and yet, if orthodoxy be true, you have hardly made an approximation to what God is actually doing, and will continue to do through all eternity! You cannot conceive of any thing so horrible that God will not infinitely surpass it.

Perhaps I may be told that this is orthodoxy of "the olden time;" that Christians do not believe in all these horrors now; that they have milder views of God's dealings. I wish it were so, altogether. But there are many circumstances to show that this is only partial. Dr. Edwards is not yet obsolete, and he tells us plainly that "there is no reason to suspect that possibly ministers set forth this matter beyond what it really is, that possibly it is not so dreadful and terrible as is pretended, and that ministers strain the description of it beyond just bounds. Some may be ready to think so, because it seems to them incredible that there should be so dreadful a misery to any creature; but there is no reason for any such thoughts as these. . . . There is no reason to think that ministers describe the misery of the wicked beyond what it is, because the Scripture teaches us that this is one end of ungodly men, to show the dreadful and power of God. . . . The Scriptures teach that the wrath of

God on wicked men is dreadful beyond all that we can conceive. . . . We have rather reason to suppose that after we have said our utmost, and thought our utmost, all that we have said or thought is but a faint shadow of the reality."

What effect these torments are to have on the inhabitants of heaven is somewhat disputed. The Rev. Tryon Edwards, in a sermon which appeared in the *National Preacher* in 1838, says, "O! it is enough to make angels weep to think of all the disappointed hopes, and the blighted feelings, and ruined prospects, and the perverted intellect, and the broken hearts of hell! To see the eye that might have sparkled with celestial brightness, gleaming forever with hopeless desperation; to hear the tongue that might have hymned the sweet anthems of the redeemed, breaking the silence of perdition only with weeping and wailing; to behold the intellect, the heart, the soul, the entire being that might have adorned the heaven of heavens, cast down to the blackness of darkness, the companion of devils and lost spirits—yes it is enough to make angels weep—enough, I had almost said, to wake compassion in the heart of the vilest outcast of perdition!" But the venerable Dr. Edwards takes a very different view of the case. "The sight of hell torments," says he, "will exalt the happiness of the saints forever. It will not only make them more sensible of the greatness and freeness of the grace of God, in

their happiness ; but it will really make their happiness the greater, as it will make them more sensible of their own happiness ; it will give them a more lively relish of it ; it will make them prize it more. When they see others, who were of the same nature, and born under the same circumstances, plunged in such misery and they so distinguished, O, it will make them sensible how happy they are. A sense of the opposite misery, in all cases, greatly increases the relish of any joy or pleasure."

I hope this will suffice on this head of Hell's Horrors. That it could be made more horrible than here described is very probable, but I shall not trouble myself for other authorities, and much less shall I attempt to add any thing of my own. And in closing this chapter I think I may, without offence, express my earnest wish that all good orthodox believers in endless hell torments will read it with care, and profit by the brief exposition I have given of that important doctrine. And if they believe there is such a place and such punishments, they will certainly feel themselves under obligations to me for bringing together into so small a compass such a variety of descriptions, descriptions gathered from so many authors, and duly set in order and faithfully transcribed. Orthodox ministers will here find what is most essential for sound and powerful sermons, and the young, if they will but possess themselves of this

chapter, may with little expense or labor vie with the oldest and most eloquent in descriptions of hell, and its varied torments and horrors. It now only remains for me to speak of the *numbers*, who, it is believed, will be finally consigned to this "world of wo."

CHAPTER III.

OF THE NUMBER OF THE DAMNED.

On this important subject there has been, and probably still is, much diversity of opinion. In quite recent times some of our orthodox divines have shown a great solicitude to reduce the number of the finally damned to the lowest point possible. Indeed there have been pretty clear intimations from certain quarters that they were strongly opposed to damning any considerable portion of the human race, and thought the damation of a few necessary only as a kind of example. There are many honest christians of the present age, I believe, who would be very well satisfied if all were to be saved, except perhaps Judas Iscariot and a few other eminent sinners. They value the *principle* which embraces endless punishment beyond measure, but are not anxious to see it widely put in practice. Hence for years past there has been with many a growing desire to lessen

the number of the damned, and thus, as I more than suspect, to do something toward justifying the moral government of the Almighty, and saving orthodoxy from the attacks of Universalists which are becoming more and more annoying, and from which, on its old grounds, it is less and less easily defended.

To Dr. Lyman Beecher belongs the honor, I believe, of leading off on this new tack. As early as 1827 or '28, he said, "It seems to be the imagination of some that the kingdom of darkness will be as populous as the kingdom of light, and that happiness and misery of equal dimensions will expand, side by side, to all eternity. But blessed be God, it is mere imagination; totally unsupported by reason or revelation. Who ever heard of a prison that occupied one *half* the territories of a kingdom, or who can believe that the universe, which was called into being, and is upheld and governed, to express the goodness of God, will contain as much misery as happiness? How could the government of God be celebrated with such raptures in heaven, if it filled with dismay and ruin *half* the universe? How vast soever, therefore, the kingdom of darkness may be in itself considered, it is certainly nothing but the prison of the universe, and small compared with the realms of light and glory. The world of misery shrinks into a point, and the wailings of the damned die away and are lost in the song of praise."

Prof. Stuart followed the example so nobly set by Dr. Beecher. On certain suppositions concerning the designations of time in the prophecies which he indulged, he thinks that "the triumphs of redeeming love will bring home to glory such multitudes of our ruined race, that the number who may finally perish will scarcely be thought of in comparison with the countless myriads of those who will come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads." Dr. Joel Parker, late President of the Union Theological Seminary in the city of New York, follows in the same strain. "We know not," says he, "the comparative magnitude of the prison of hell. It may bear a proportion to all the moral intelligences of Jehovah's empire, not unlike a country jail to the inhabitants of the world at the present time." On this hypothesis Dr. Parker seems to think that we may justify the character and government of God. Dr. Albert Barnes adopts a similar mode of expression. He says, "Taking the race as a whole, there is no reason to think that the number of those who should be lost, compared with the immense multitudes that shall be saved by the work of Christ will be more than the *prisoners* in a community now, compared with the number of peaceful and virtuous citizens." Other divines of the present day speak in much the same manner. One told his audience that "the Devil would not at the conclusion of the

judgment day, go down to hell with flying colors, at the head of a large portion of mankind, as some supposed, but on the contrary, a very small part of Adam's race would descend with him."

Still this is by no means the general opinion even now; and if we speak of past times, it is at a vast remove from the standards of established and venerable orthodoxy. The language of our Savior, Matt. vii. 13, 14, concerning the strait gate and narrow way that lead to life, and the wide gate and broad way that lead to destruction are almost uniformly taken by the orthodox as descriptive of the fact in relation to the concerns and fate of men in eternity. *Many* go to destruction, "meaning eternal misery," says Dr. Adam Clarke, and *few* enter into life, i. e. reach heaven. The learned author just named says, "There are *few* who find the way to heaven; fewer yet who abide any time in it; fewer still who *walk* in it; and fewest of all who *persevere* unto the end." Dr. Bloomfield paraphrases the passage thus, "Aim at entering in at the *strait gate*; though there be a gate that is wide and the way to it broad, and many are travelling along it, yet it leads to destruction; therefore take it not. And though there be a gate that is strait, and the way to it narrow, and few are they that travel thereto; yet it leads to life and eternal happiness." The pious Matthew Henry says, "They that are going to heaven are but few compared to those that are

going to hell; a remnant, a little flock, like the grape gleanings of the vintage, as the eight that were saved in the ark."

This is, and has for ages been the common doctrine. It is generally believed that all who are not brought to true repentance toward God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, during this life, will certainly be damned. This of course consigns the whole heathen world to endless torments, and a large part of christendom itself!—With respect to the fate of the heathen, our so called orthodox neighbors entertain no doubts, nor do they hesitate to speak clearly of their damnation. The Rev. David Abeel, Missionary to China, contrasting of America and pagan countries, says, "Here there are comparatively few to be saved; there crowds are lying in hopeless, helpless wretchedness. None of these few are obliged to sink into hell—none of these crowds, we fear, can rise to heaven. They know no Savior." And he implores his brethren, "if there is any thing in the eternal and irremediable destruction of millions of immortal beings," to awake and be doing. Another writer says, "**FIFTY THOUSAND A DAY.** So fast the heathen die. They have sinned and not repented, and are unprepared for heaven. . . . Fifty thousand every day go down to the fire that 'is not quenched,' and should we not think of it as often as *once* every day. *Six hundred millions* more are going the same road.

. . . Christian reader, I have been among them. I have seen many of those thousands. . . Think of them I pray you. All can do that. Think, for at least *one minute each day*, of the *fifty thousand*, who that day sink to the doom of the lost, and the *six hundred millions* more who are hastening to the same ruin of soul"! In like manner does the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions speak. "To send the gospel to the heathen," says that renowned Board, "is a work of *great exigency*. Within the last thirty years a whole generation of *five hundred millions*, for aught we can see in their character, or in the word of God, have gone down to eternal death." The Rev. Dr. Cheever entertains the same cheering faith. He says, "The belief of the truth that hundreds of millions of our fellow beings are, generation after generation, sinking into endless ruin; and that God has placed in our hands the means of their salvation; an appreciation of this truth, with a spiritual vividness and power at all like that which dwelt in the souls of the apostles, would quite arrest and enchain the mind beneath its influence, so that a man would act with so much exhaustless energy for the redemption of his fellow beings that the world would well nigh deem him mad. And such madness would be true wisdom." Thus it is seen to be a grand doctrine of orthodoxy on all hands, that all the heathen are to be damned everlastingly, unless their fellows

will, by some means not very clearly understood & fear, work out their redemption—a thing which those who believe all this show the least disposition imaginable to do, except it is to be done, forsooth, by sheer *talking*.

But the various sects of orthodox christians are scarcely satisfied with consigning the whole heathen world to endless torments. They can with difficulty refrain from damning each other ! It is a constant doctrine, I believe, in the Romish church, that there is no salvation beyond its own pale. This of course settles the destination of all Protestants. But many of the Protestants fully revenge themselves by damning all, or at least the greater part of the Catholics ; while both parties heartily agree in giving over all Universalists, Unitarians, Quakers, etc. to the tender mercies of hell fire.—Athanasius, or somebody whose so called creed is ascribed to him, says very plainly, “ Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith ; which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. And the Catholic faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity.” This is predicating salvation or damnation on very narrow grounds, it must be confessed, and yet this creed is believed by the larger part of christendom, whether Catholic or Protestant. Indeed this practice of damning one another and nearly

the whole world, has gone so far, that as Dr. Barrow remarks, "whole bodies of men are thus judged at once, and nothing it is in one breath to damn whole Churches, at one push to throw down whole nations into the bottomless pit."

The consequence, as might be expected under such circumstances, is, that to be strictly orthodox one must believe in the damnation of a very large portion of the human race. Notwithstanding the milder opinion of a few recent divines, it is the clear voice of the church that *few* shall be saved, while *many* shall perish everlastingly. We have seen how Protestants express themselves on this point. Let us turn to the Catholics, who on this subject are the teachers of Protestants. Massillon has a long sermon on the small number of the elect, in which he not only states the fact, but attempts to show why so few are to be saved and so large a number to be damned. "In glancing," says he, "at the history of the just from age to age, you will observe that at all times the elect have been very few. The family of Noah was alone saved from the general flood. Abraham was alone distinguished from the rest of the world and became the depository of the covenant.—Joshua and Caleb only of six hundred thousand Hebrews, entered the land of promise. A Job was the only just man in the land of Uz; Lot in Sodom; the three Jewish children in Babylon. To such frightful images succeed the expressions of

the prophets. In Isaiah you see the elect represented as the grapes left after the vintage, and which had escaped the hand of the gatherer, or like the ears of corn which remain after the harvest, and which the sickle of the reaper has missed. The gospel adds new traits to the fearfulness of these images. I have spoken to you of two ways, one of which is strait and rough, the way of a very small number; the other broad and spacious, strewn with flowers, which is the common way, as it were, of all men. In a word, you will observe that throughout the sacred Scriptures, the multitude is always reprobate, and the elect, compared with the rest of mankind, make only a little flock which almost escapes our notice."—Cornelius a Lapide adopts the same views, and speaks in much the same manner. Indeed, if I do not mistake the eloquent Massillon had his eye on his pages when he prepared that famous sermon. Lapide finds many "types" of the great disparity in the numbers of the saved and of the damned. "The first of which," says he, "is Lot who with his two daughters, alone escaped from the burning of Sodom and the cities of the plain. . . . The second type is in the deluge, for here Noah alone with seven souls were saved, while the rest were swallowed up. . . . The third is found in the entering into the land of promise, which is a type of heaven; for two only, Joshua and Caleb out of six hundred thousand Hebrews, entered

there. The fourth type is in Isaiah, where the prophet compares those of Damascus, who were saved from the slaughter of the Chaldeans, to a few ears of corn after the harvest, and to a few grapes after the vintage; yea, to two or three olives left after the pressing of the oil. These are types of the paucity of the saved." He finds a fifth proof of this fact from the express words of Christ, "Many are called but few chosen."—"Finally," says he, "the multitude of the damned may be determined from the magnitude of hell, which is 1600 stadia, (Rev. xiv. 20,) that is, 200 miles, and this in all directions, to wit, as hell is 200 miles deep so it is the same in height and breadth, which space is capable of holding many thousand millions of the damned, who will be pressed together in hell like pickles or fish in a barrel." What would the honest Lapidé have thought if he had heard our modern divines and poets speaking of hell as a "*world* of wo"—"*a universe* of death," not merely a cave whose sides are two hundred miles long, but so large that, as the Jewish Rabbins speak, it would take a man three hundred years to travel through it, or as Milton represents it, so broad that even an angel's eye cannot comprehend it?

That his opinion relative to the number of the damned, is true, Lapidé argues from the notorious fact that "far the greater part of mankind is infidels, Turks, Saracens, and heretics. But

even of the faithful, St. Chrysostom thinks that scarcely one in a thousand will be saved : for he says, " How many think you in our city (Antioch) will be saved ? It pains me to say it ; notwithstanding I will speak. In so many thousands (Antioch contained a hundred thousand and more) a hundred cannot be found who will be saved and even of these I have my doubts." . . . " St-Augustine compares the Church to a threshing floor, in which there is more chaff than wheat, more bad than good, more to be damned than saved."

But Drexelius relates a case still more definite and satisfactory. " A certain woman," he says, quoting from Hieronymous Plautus, "hearing Bertoldus, a very eminent and powerful preacher inveigh bitterly against a sin, of which she knew herself guilty, fell down dead ; but after a while being brought to life again by the pious prayers of the congregation, she gave them an account of what she had seen in her trance, which was to this effect. I stood she said before God's tribunal together with sixty thousand souls, who were summoned from all parts of the universe to appear before the judge, and they were all sentenced to eternal death, *three only excepted !*" The honest Drexelius thinks it not important to enquire whether this story is true or not, for the Savior has represented the essential fact in the same light, in ~~that~~ notable passage, Matt. vii. 13, 14.

before referred to. He is ingenuous enough, however, to confess that "it might seem indeed astonishing to us, that a God of infinite mercy and goodness, should pass so severe and dreadful a sentence against so many thousand miserable creatures!"—a thought which many of our orthodox neighbors, it is presumed, have never indulged.

It must be evident to all, from what has now appeared, that according to orthodoxy, as well ancient as modern, a very large part of the human family is destined to be fuel for hell-fire, and that, not only of "the world's people," but also of the church itself! How, with this fact before them, orthodox ministers can call God "the God of salvation," and Jesus Christ "the Savior of the world," I do not well understand. They certainly can attach no meaning to such language. Indeed nothing is clearer than the fact that while their whole attention has been fixed on every line and every word that can be construed to relate to "hell and damnation," they have never suspected that such passages as speak distinctly of the final conquest of good over evil, and the drawing and ultimate subjection of all things to Jesus Christ, in order that GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL, have any force, or deserve the slightest consideration.

CHAPTER IV.

OF BELIEF IN ENDLESS PUNISHMENT.

We have now glanced at Hell, and considered some of its horrors, as they are exhibited by orthodoxy; and also called attention to the immense numbers of the human race who are to suffer them forever. After the numerous and pointed quotations I have made upon these subjects, it must be useless to say that orthodox divines have exerted all their powers, and employed no little time, in inventing and setting forth these torments. They have sought out every mode of torture, whether of body or of mind, under which it seems possible for man to suffer. They have represented these tortures as the most multiplied in kind, the most intense in degree, and absolutely incessant and never-ending in duration. And when they have exhausted their faculties, and carried the description of the miseries of the damned up to the highest point to be attained by human language or imagination, the most learned and sober among them, coolly tell us that these descriptions, horrid as they are, suggest but "painted fires," and are incapable of giving us more than the faintest conceptions of the unspeakably awful miseries of that world of woe; that they are nothing, indeed, for the dread reality infinitely transcends all the powers of thought or imagination.

The advocates of this tremendous doctrine do not hesitate to represent the Deity as utterly destitute of every form and degree of benevolence toward the damned, and as employing his infinite attributes, and working perpetual miracles to increase their torments. They exhibit him as burning with rage toward them, and stirring up all his wrath. He is as merciless as the grave itself; and it is this that makes hell so fearful. His revenge is infinitely more implacable than that of the most brutal savage, or the greatest tyrant that ever disgraced humanity; and this adds to its fearfulness. No time, no suffering endured by the damned, no repentance, no prayers, no tears will avail to appease him, or in the least degree mitigate his infinite and endless wrath. He has no ear to hear their petitions, and no heart to feel for their sufferings. Nay, he will not even grant them the poor request to withdraw his hand and let them die and cease to be.

How infinitely more rational and scriptural are the views of Swedenborg, who teaches that the Lord is good—good to all and good forever; that he is love itself and mercy itself, and forever wills the salvation and happiness of all men, and is perpetually endeavoring to draw spirits away from hell—to draw all to himself? True, it is painful to think that God will be forever disappointed, and must endlessly fail to subdue his own creatures to himself! But still it is far better to think

God amiable and benevolent, even if we are left to question his wisdom and power, than to regard him malignant and revengeful, and as worse to the damned than even the Devil himself could be. It is gratifying, therefore, to know that these views, which bespeak an improving tone of moral feeling, are already received by many of the best christians in the land, and many, too, who have no connexion with Swedenborg's followers, but stand connected with various orthodox denominations.

In view of the torments to be inflicted, according to orthodoxy, in the future world, and the countless multitude of human beings who are to suffer them, the question naturally forces itself upon every reflecting mind, how is it possible for men to believe a doctrine fraught with such appalling consequences—a doctrine that involves such inconceivable misery to man, and reflects so much dishonor upon his Maker? It must be confessed by all to be the most tremendous doctrine ever believed or preached on earth, by Christian, Mahometan, or Pagan. And it obviously demands an amount and a clearness of proof beyond what is necessary to support any other doctrine received by man. He who receives it lightly or with an easy faith, is guilty of a monstrous wrong to his own nature, and to his God. We are not at liberty to believe all that this doctrine implies against the Deity, on mere

hear-say, or prescriptive authority. Nor is it enough that our fathers have believed it, or that the Church has believed it. For they either believed it with reason, or without reason; if with, then that reason remains and may command our belief as well as theirs; if without, it is high time that we ceased to abuse the truth, and insult Heaven with a doctrine so monstrous. No man has a right to assume it, to take it for granted. It is not a doctrine to be assumed: it must be proved, and proved, too, in such a way as to challenge belief and silence objections. But can this be done; has it been done? Few doctrines have been more widely believed; very few have been more labored, or been the subjects of higher efforts to show their validity. All kinds of men have endeavored to establish it, the worst as well as the best, infidels as well as believers. Christians profess that it is clearly revealed and they must receive it. And yet not one in a thousand of them is willing to rest it on mere scriptural authority. They know that the Scriptures are by no means decisive in its favor. The learned are aware that the whole controversy, so far as the Bible is concerned, turns upon the meaning given to a single word! I allude to the word rendered *eternal*, *everlasting*, *forever*, etc. which as every scholar knows is ambiguous; or rather, perhaps, like all words of the kind, is used with great latitude of meaning. Sometimes it is ap-

plied to the duration of the Divine Being, and sometimes to the lifetime of a man; sometimes to the Jewish economy, and at others to the Christian, which is vastly more protracted; sometimes to the seventy years of the Babylonish captivity, and at others to the exile and dispersion of the Jews at the present time. And is a doctrine of such a momentous character as that of endless punishment to be predicated on a word like this? You might as well attempt to poise Atlas on the shoulders of a child.

Hence it happens that much of the faith in endless punishment is merely prescriptive and concessionary. Men believe, not because they understand the doctrine, but simply because they do not. Their faith rests on the authority, and sometimes, I fear, upon the impudence and effrontery of those who advocate it. For never was there a doctrine, though clear as sunlight, preached with more dogmatism, or enforced with a bolder or a more shameless arrogance. Still their daring and reckless assertions furnish almost the only evidence we have of their faith. I have long been convinced that even the staunchest advocates of this monstrous doctrine have little belief in it, and I find that some even of themselves are of the same opinion. The Rev. Dr. Milner, late President of Queen's College, Cambridge, himself a zealous friend of the doctrine in question, says, "Now, whatever we may pre-

tend, I believe there are few who thoroughly believe in God's threatenings of eternal punishment to the wicked. It is not that men do positively deny this to be so ; but they put off the thought, they start difficulties respecting it, they are prejudiced and selfish in forming their judgements concerning it, they half believe and half reject the awful denunciations. . . . In effect the belief of the loss of the soul in hell is usually a motive that has laid very slight hold of the mind, and, by consequence, very little affects the practice." Dr. Cheever and others virtually make the same confession.

The fact is, the doctrine of endless punishment is in itself so monstrous and horrid, it so transcends all our convictions of justice, it is so inconsistent with all tolerable conceptions of the divine character and government, it is, in one word, so irrational and even absurd, that few men can by any possibility be brought thoroughly, not to say cordially, to believe it. They do not need to start difficulties concerning it, for difficulties more than they are able to resolve start up of themselves.— They need not to be prejudiced and selfish in order to shrink from it, for those most unprejudiced and unselfish, the most candid and the best, abhor it most deeply, and are forced to demand the strongest proof before they can even reluctantly assent to it. While a savage, or a man of a brutal and unsympathetic nature, has little difficulty in receiving

this doctrine, such men as Origen, as Fenelon, as Oberlin, as Wm. Law, as Dr. Rush, either strongly question, or clearly deny it.

I have before remarked that the advocates of endless punishment—I mean *christian* advocates, for the doctrine has more believers beyond the pale of the church, fourfold, than it has within—uniformly appeal to the Scriptures for proof, and alledge that upon its testimony do they rest its vindication. Yet they are perfectly aware, at least they virtually concede, that it is only on an interpretative basis that it is capable of being maintained. If the letter of the Scriptures is to be adhered to, the doctrine of transubstantiation must be acknowledged to be vastly stronger than that of endless punishment, for the former is taught by clear and express terms, while the latter is represented only in ambiguous or doubtful words.—Why do Protestant, and I suspect all thoughtful and honest, christians reject the doctrine of transubstantiation? Simply because it is unreasonable and absurd. It contradicts the established facts of nature, and the testimony of our senses. It avails nothing with a reasonable man, in the free exercise of his faculties, to be told that the Bible teaches that a piece of bread which Christ held in his hands, and which was afterwards eaten by his apostles, was at the same time Christ's own body! He knows that the Bible can inculcate no such absurdity, and if it contains language

which literally implies this, he is convinced that it must be interpreted in a manner to accord with facts and reason.

The advocates of endless punishment seem to be secretly conscious that a mere text of Scripture, more or less clear in its favor, is not sufficient alone to sustain that tremendous doctrine. Hence they are perpetually seeking for some principle, some rational ground on which it may rest, and in accordance with which its proof-texts may be interpreted. I very much doubt whether five respectable advocates of endless punishment can be referred to, who dare risk its interests on the Scriptures alone, and the few persons who have made the hazardous experiment, have, by their very daring, most effectually betrayed their cause. For first, such a doctrine as this must be clearly and strongly revealed, if revealed at all. It is not to be inferred from a few doubtful and disputed passages; nor can it rest on nice criticisms upon the original languages, nor on any hair-splitting exegesis. It is not to be *drawn* from the Scriptures; the Scriptures, on the contrary, must *force* it upon every thoughtful and candid mind. It is not to be found in the Bible because we seek for it there, but because we can not study the Bible without its pressing itself upon our convictions. And I must be permitted to add, that if endless punishment is true as a doctrine of revelation, it must, from its very nature, be so

clear, so convincing as to require no labor to show and maintain it against all objectors. But is this the case? No man at all acquainted with the subject, is ignorant of the fact that to prove this terrible dogma, is a task of no ordinary magnitude and difficulty. Few, very few are willing to undertake it. In the city of New York, with its *two hundred* ministers of this monstrous faith, there is not *one* to be found at the present time, nor has there been for the last seven years, who is willing to assume this task in a frank and manly mode, and, as Dr. Beecher once said, "in an open field and fair play." Valorous they sometimes are in their own pulpits, and insolent and abusive in their religious journals. They are bold in assuming and also in asserting their peculiar faith, but for proving it, and most of all, for proving it against the objections of Universalists they have little taste. True, many of them possess a wonderful facility in quoting half a dozen or a dozen passages of Scripture, which they seem to imagine Universalists have never seen, or heard of before. But it may be doubted whether this learned mode of argumentation is very conclusive. Certain it is that it does not reach the precise point in debate. We are all aware of the existence of such rare passages as, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment," the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, the sin against the Holy Ghost,

etc. etc. What we particularly require at the hands of our orthodox neighbors, is that they demonstrate, if they can, that these passages relate to the future state, and prove that punishment is absolutely endless. And this let me add is the great task, and one for which they have the least possible love.

But in the second place, the doctrine of endless punishment, to be entitled to our faith, must be shown to be *reasonable* as well as scriptural. It is not enough to find a passage in the Bible that seems to favor it, or if you please that, literally interpreted, teaches it distinctly. If this were so, the doctrine of transubstantiation is beyond all controversy true. On this subject the words of the Savior are express, and, in themselves, unambiguous; which can not be affirmed of any quoted to prove endless punishment. Yet no man can rationally believe in transubstantiation, express and determinate as the Scriptures may be in relation to it. They can not thus believe, because that doctrine clearly contradicts established facts in nature, as well as the testimony of our senses. But the doctrine of endless punishment is equally contradictory to all we know of the character and government of God, and is in itself a thousand times more improbable than transubstantiation. I could much sooner believe that a piece of bread has been miraculously made the body of Christ, than I could that a God of infinite

love and mercy will torment millions and millions of his own offspring world without end ! One is merely unreasonable, the other is not only absurd but in the highest degree derogatory to God and revolting to every pure sentiment of the human heart.

I hold it to be self-evident, that a God of infinite justice and love, would not threaten any punishment, and least of all an endless punishment, without a sufficient reason; and also that he would not require us to believe a doctrine so horrible, and in itself so incredible, as that under examination, without either disclosing the reason, or furnishing us, in some way, with the means of discovering it. Revelation, we should remember, is but a gift of light and knowledge, communicated by the God of reason to men as reasonable beings. He asks faith at our hands, it is true, but he does not shock it with absurdities. If endless punishment be a reality; if that inconceivable mass of wretchedness shadowed forth under that fearful term, is to be suffered, I can not avoid the conviction, that it must be founded on some great and terrible necessity; must have a reason so broad, and so cogent, that it could hardly fail to appear in the Scriptures, and be recognized in the very constitution of things. Strange beyond all parallel it must be, if there exists, or ever shall exist, in the universe of God, such a place as hell, and such torments as are ascribed

to it, and mortals yet left quite ignorant wherefore ; left in darkness not only by reason, but even by revelation itself. But strange as it may seem, this is undeniably the fact. For although the advocates of endless punishment have put in exercise all their inventive faculties to bring forth something that would pass for a sufficient reason of the doctrine, a careful examination will show how unsuccessful all their efforts have hitherto been.

But still their efforts have not been altogether in vain. They have demonstrated the fact that, whether they acknowledge it or not, whether they know it or not, our orthodox neighbors deeply feel the burden that lies upon them and are anxious to shake it off. They are sensible that the doctrine of endless punishment is abominable, and needs support which they can not give it. They are conscious that reliance upon the Scriptures alone for the defence of such a doctrine is extremely hazardous, and hence their perpetual endeavors to find some substantial grounds on which to rest. They pay a tacit respect to reason while they affect to despise it.

To men resolved on finding a reason for a doctrine which they had before pledged themselves to maintain, there could of course be no obstacles which human ingenuity, stimulated by party spirit and selfishness, would not surmount. The

consequence has been that the grounds on which the advocates of endless punishment have predicated their beloved dogma have been numerous, if not valid. It has been a series of experiments, alike unsatisfactory and futile. But there has been only here and there one at very wide intervals, who has dared boldly to set reason at defiance, and say, "The Bible teaches this doctrine, and I believe it. I know no reason for it: the Scriptures reveal none, nor can I imagine what it may be. Nay, perhaps there is none, but the Bible says these shall go away into everlasting punishment, and this decides the point." This would be honest. It would exhibit the power of faith—implicit faith. And as I shall show in the sequel, the doctrine may claim a few such believers and advocates.

We have now seen something of the popular views of hell, and of the number of the damned; we have also seen how difficult it is to believe this doctrine, and how earnestly men have labored to obtain some rational ground, some principle of moral government, on which they might rest this tremendous doctrine, and in accordance with which they might interpret certain passages of Scripture in its favor. It only remains now to examine the fruits of all the anxious inquiry of the orthodox world on this momentous subject.

CHAPTER V.

OF THE GROUNDS OF ENDLESS PUNISHMENT.

SEC. 1. *Sin, it is said, is infinite, and deserves an infinite punishment.*

As I have before intimated, the staunchest advocates of endless punishment are sensible of its abhorrent character, and its utter inconsistency with all our better views of the Divine Being, which as christians, we are forced to entertain. Drexelius confesses that it "might seem astonishing that a God of infinite mercy and goodness should pass so dreadful a sentence against so many thousand miserable creatures," were it not for certain considerations which tend to reconcile him to it. So does Dr. Edwards concede that it naturally "seems to us not suitable, that any poor creature should be the subject of such misery, because we have no sense of any thing abominable and provoking in any creature answerable to it. If we had, then this infinite calamity would not seem unsuitable."

What, then, are the considerations which show that endless punishment is only proportionable to the crime, so that the mind can "rest in it," as Dr. Edwards says, "as fit and suitable, and no more than what is proper to be ordered by the just, holy and good Governor of the world?" I need not say that one of the most popular grounds on

which it has been attempted to predicate and justify the doctrine in question, is the alledged INFINITY OF SIN. Sin, it is said, is an infinite evil, and consequently deserves an infinite punishment.

This argument, if so by courtesy it be called, appears in different forms, and rests on different data. Sometimes sin is said to be infinite in its own nature ; sometimes because it is an offence against an infinite God, or God's infinite majesty ; sometimes, again, because it is a violation of infinite obligation ; sometimes because it is infinitely opposed to God, and would hurl him from his throne if it could ; and finally, it is sometimes represented as deriving its infinite character from the sinner's knowledge of the good of being, which is infinite. As might be expected, this mode of trifling is very ancient. It may be traced back to Augustine, the father of Calvinism, so called. It flourished in the days of the Schoolmen, and was employed particularly by Thomas Aquinas, one of the most distinguished among them. It has been maintained, also, by great numbers of modern divines, Protestant as well as Catholic, such as Drexelius, Mosheim, Schubert, Edwards, and a host of inferior names. To exhibit one phase of the argument, I shall here quote a passage from Dr. Edwards' famous sermon on the eternity of hell torments. His object is to show

that punishment "absolutely without end," is not contrary to the justice of God.

"To evince this," says he, "I shall use only one argument, viz. that sin is heinous enough to deserve such a punishment, and such a punishment is no more than proportionable to the evil or demerit of sin. If the evil of sin be infinite, as the punishment is, then it is manifest that the punishment is no more than proportionable to the sin punished, and is no more than sin deserves. And if the obligation to love, honor and obey God be infinite, then sin, which is a violation of this obligation, is a violation of infinite obligation, and so is an infinite evil. Again, if God be infinitely worthy of love, honor and obedience, then our obligation to love, honor and obey him is infinitely great. So that God being infinitely glorious, or infinitely worthy of our love, honor and obedience; our obligation to love, honor and obey him, and so avoid all sin, is infinitely great. Again, our obligation to love, honor and obey God, being infinitely great, sin is a violation of infinite obligation, and so is an infinite evil. Once more—sin, being an infinite evil, deserves an infinite punishment; an infinite punishment is no more than it deserves. Therefore such punishment is just; which was the thing to be proved."

This wears the aspect of demonstration; and the venerable divine who thus reasoned seems to have thought his argument sound and conclu-

sive. Yet it must embrace a most egregious fallacy, or it makes man a God at once. Dr. Edwards, assumes, it will be observed, what should have been first proved, viz. that man's obligations and accountability, and consequently his guilt, are to be measured, not by his own limited powers, his finite nature, but by the infinite majesty and excellence of the Deity. Now this assumption, which is incapable of a shadow of proof, vitiates the whole argument in all its forms. It follows that this mode of reasoning, however varied, can lead to nothing but error and absurdity.

The word *infinite*, I scarcely need observe, is used in two senses very widely different from each other. Properly speaking, and etymologically, it signifies what is the opposite of finite, that is, what is boundless, without limits. Thus we speak of infinite space, infinite duration, infinite goodness, etc. etc. by which we mean that space, duration and goodness are so great that we cannot conceive it possible to add any thing to them. But the term is often used loosely and hyperbolically in relation to what is indefinitely large, what is immense, or very great of its kind, but which is still limited and finite. A neglect of this important distinction, may, perhaps, have contributed much to the fallacious reasoning under consideration. Yet that men like Edwards and many others who have adopted this kind of argu-

ment, should have indulged in so glaring an error can be fully accounted for only on the supposition that they were so intent on making out their case, that they were not very careful about the means. Provided they could reach their conclusion in a plausible way, they must have troubled themselves very little about the premises. The eternity of punishment was to be proved reasonable and just, and what shorter method could be adopted than by the fallacy before us: I do not say that they saw it to be a fallacy; but it must be obvious that they could not have examined it as they should, before it was admitted to support such a monstrous doctrine as that of endless punishment.

Nothing can be more certain than that man's actions can no more be infinite than he is so. If he is a finite creature, all his acts must of necessity be finite also. And to say that man can commit an infinite sin or do an infinite evil, is either to talk very loosely, or else to talk sheer nonsense. An infinite sin, if we speak with any degree of accuracy, must be a sin so great that we can neither conceive its magnitude, nor indeed conceive it possible that it should be greater than it is. It must not only surpass all finite thought, but it must be absolutely infinite. Now such a sin, or such an evil, in the universe of God, it must readily be perceived, would be one of the most inconvenient things imaginable. The Almighty himself could do nothing greater, and consequent-

ly could never by policy, or power, or grace, either overcome or affect it. Such an evil, once in the universe, would remain here forever unchanged and unchangeable.

If sin be absolutely infinite, as the argument we are examining assumes, I willingly concede that punishment, to be proportionable to it, must be infinite likewise. No finite punishment, however great, could be strictly adequate and just; nay, it could not make even an approximation to justice, since what is finite, is from that very circumstance *infinitely* removed from that which is infinite. But this is not all; if sin is, properly speaking, infinite, it follows, of course, that it is infinite in every respect, and to be justly punished, the punishment must be infinite in degree, in severity, as well as in duration. But this is too palpably absurd to have escaped the notice of some at least of those who have indulged themselves in fallacies of this kind, and who therefore have attempted to avoid it. An American divine says, "As sinners are incapable of enduring a punishment infinite in *degree*, they deserve to bear one infinite in *duration*." Schubert adopts the same opinion. "It is impossible," says he, "for any creature to suffer a punishment infinitely severe. Since, therefore, sinners shall suffer an infinite punishment, God must damn them to a punishment of infinite duration." But wherefore?—Would it require any greater exercise of Divine

power to sustain a sinner under an infinite punishment inflicted in a finite duration, than it would to sustain the same sinner under a finite punishment protracted through an infinite duration?—Certainly not. But if sin be absolutely infinite, why not have the punishment correspond to it, and be infinite also, infinite both in duration and degree? I protest strongly against all delicacy and fastidiousness on this subject. If men are resolved to set up a theory, let them not shrink from its legitimate consequences. Moreover, let it be considered that an infinite punishment can never be inflicted, except it be infinite in degree, for the simple reason that an infinite duration can never be completed, and consequently God's justice can never be satisfied, nor sinners rewarded according to their works. As the pious Drexelius says, "God can never torment them enough, though their torments will endure to all eternity."

But this is not all. If sin be absolutely infinite, it follows as a necessary consequence that all sins are alike, all have the same demerit. There can be no great sins nor little sins, any more than there can be great and little infinities. Whatever is infinite is infinite, and the terms more and less are utterly inapplicable to it. "There is," as Archbp. Dawes says, "no such thing as degrees in infinite." This reduces what all men recognize as the most heinous sins to the common level of mere venial offences, or more properly speaking, it ex-

alts every sin to the highest degree, and stamps all alike as absolutely infinite. This is, of course, to deny one of the simplest facts of the moral world; one recognized equally by the whole legislation of the human race, by our individual consciousness, and the clear teachings of the Scriptures. Nothing is more certain than that the sins of men differ widely in their magnitude. If it be not so, then the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is no graver an offence than the most trivial wrong action, word or thought, of which one can be guilty. If it be not so, then conscience is false, and the Bible is a tissue of lies, and the universal convictions of mankind are nothing worth. It might perhaps be shown that some churches have actually fallen into such an egregious blunder, and maintain that all sins without exception deserve endless punishment. The Presbyterian Confession of Faith, for instance, lays it down as a clear doctrine of revelation, that "every sin, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, doth, in its own nature, bring guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God, and curse of the law, and so made subject to death, with all misery, spiritual, temporal and eternal." Every sin, of course, deserves the same punishment. Petit larceny is, in the sight of God, just as great a sin as adultery or murder. Nay the infinite sin of having been born a child

of Adam, justly deserves the infinite pains of hell forever! Yet, entertaining such notions as these, our orthodox friends still talk of *degrees* of punishment. Even Dr. Edwards says, 'The Scripture teaches that the wicked will suffer different *degrees* of torment, according to the different aggravations of their sins.' What the aggravation of an infinite sin can be, or how infinite sins can admit of "different aggravations," is, I humbly confess, beyond my ability to conceive. If sin is infinite, aggravations are impossible; if it is not infinite, then no aggravations can make it so. Besides, it deserves to be considered that if sin is infinite, one sin alone merits all the punishment which it is possible for an infinite God to inflict, or an infinite creature—pardon the solecism—to suffer. Nay, as I have shown, an infinite duration of infinite torment is no greater punishment than an infinite sin deserves. The consequence is, that when a man has committed one offence, he need fear no more; and according to orthodoxy, that one offence is born with us all, in the form of original sin! So that an infant, just opening its eyes upon the light of the sun, as really deserves endless punishment as though he had lived and sinned a thousand, or ten million, years. Yea, it may justly be subjected to the same degree and duration of torment, as it is supposed the Devil himself deserves and will undergo! But perhaps I shall be told that every sin does indeed deserve

an infinite punishment, i. e. infinite in duration ; and that, of course, every sin an individual commits will add something to the severity, though it can add nothing to the duration of his punishment. To this I have before answered, by saying that if sin be infinite at all, it is infinite in every respect, and its punishment must also be infinite in every respect to correspond to it. But grant the argument to our opposers, and what follows ? Simply that the new-born infant will suffer only one infinite punishment ; the youth may suffer a hundred or a thousand ; while the old offender must endure perhaps a million infinite punishments !—And yet these million infinite punishments, fortunately for the sufferer, make but one infinite punishment. This reminds one of Athanasius' Creed : "The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God ; and yet there are not three God's, but one God." When will men learn to exercise their reason in religion as in other and less important affairs !

If sin be infinite, must it not follow that virtue or obedience is infinite also ? For as Archbp. Dawes has well said, "At this rate of arguing, the rewards of good men, as well as the punishments of bad, must necessarily be infinite and eternal.—For they having served an infinite and eternal God, ought, according to the strict rules of justice, which require that rewards as well as punishments should bear a proportion to the dignity of the

person whom we serve, to have an infinite and eternal reward. And if so, this will mightily take off from the free grace of God so much magnified in Scripture, upon account of the exceeding greatness and eternity of those rewards, which he has there promised to his faithful servants; since these, it seems, are but a just and necessary debt to them, if they are to be rewarded at all."

I may add that if sin be infinite, it is obvious that it can neither be pardoned nor atoned for.—For there is no being in the universe more than infinite, and therefore none superior to the magnitude of sin. Nor is it possible to conceive of any method by which it can be put away. The infinite obedience and merit of Christ can only equal the infinite demerit of one sin!

It has sometimes been asserted that the Scriptures support the doctrine of infinite sin, though nothing is more certain than the fact that they always speak of sin as finite, always represent it as capable of being increased, always distinguish between the greater and the less. So the Savior told Pilate that the Jewish High Priest had *greater sin* than Pilate himself, which would have been impossible were sin infinite. But there is one passage to which the ignorant often appeal to support the absurdity of infinite sin. In the book of Job the question is asked by one of Job's friends, "Are not thine iniquities infinite?" But here it is worthy of remark that the word *infinite* has no

reference to the *magnitude* of sins, but simply to their *number*, as if the speaker had said, are not thine iniquities very numerous, without number.

But why pursue this absurdity farther? Men are becoming ashamed of this old logical legerdemain, and it is growing obsolete. In this country I do not know five respectable theologians who would now bring it forward, even to save the doctrine of endless punishment. True the faculty of the Oberlin Seminary is endeavouring to restore it; but the boy cannot make his dead ass stand again. Hear Prof. Finney: "Every man has some idea of the infinite. . . . Every moral being knows that moral good is infinite. Every moral being has some idea of this on his mind.—The good of being, then, is an infinite good; and the value to be set upon it is an infinite value.—In this sense our obligation must be limitless. If good has no bounds, our obligations to do good are boundless." That is, we have some idea of an infinite good; *ergo*, we are under infinite obligations to do good, and are infinitely guilty and deserve an infinite punishment if we fail! But the Professor is not always so illogical as this. In another place he says, reasonably and scripturally, "our *knowledge* of the good increases our obligation to exercise it. If we do not know, we are under no obligation to obey. If I know, my obligation is in proportion to my knowledge of the value of the thing. It is not the value which

God sets upon it ; not the value which an angel set upon it, but it is my knowledge of its value, that regulates my obligation." According to this judicious rule, our obligations, and hence our guilt are no more infinite than our knowledge ; and as we have nothing but "some idea" of infinite good, and not a perfect knowledge of it, I can but charitably hope that God will not inflict upon us more than *some finite punishment*, corresponding to our finite idea.

I need not add that many of the most thoughtful and judicious orthodox divines in ages past, as well as at the present time, are, and have been, utterly dissatisfied with this once popular, but fallacious argument. Archbp. Dawes, once chaplain to king William and queen Anne, says that "if it proves any thing, it proves a great deal too much." So Archbishop Tillotson says, "This I doubt will, upon examination, be found to have more of subtlety than of solidity, in it. 'Tis true, indeed, that the dignity of the person against whom any offence is committed is a great aggravation of the fault. For which reason all offences against God are certainly the greatest of all other ; but that crimes should hereby be heightened to an infinite degree, can by no means be admitted. . . . Besides, that by the same reason that the least sin committed against God may be said to be infinite because of its object, the least punishment that is inflicted by God may be said to be infinite be-

cause of its author, and then all punishments from God, as well as all sins against him would be equal, which is absurd." Dr. Knapp says that theologians "resort to this statement in order to explain more easily the infiniteness of the satisfaction made by Christ, and also the eternity of the punishments of hell. Whoever, they say, breaks the laws of the Infinite Being, brings upon himself infinite guilt. But this statement, taken in the strict philosophic sense [in which alone it has any meaning] is incorrect. . . . There is no *infinitus reatus peccatorum*—infinite criminality of sinners, nor can the object against which sin is committed be made in every case the measure of its criminality or ill-desert; certainly this cannot be done with regard to God." Dr. Dwight speaks with great caution and modesty of this argument, but yet clearly shows that he regards it as no better than a logical trick, quite unworthy of confidence. He says, "It is not my design to deny this doctrine, nor to scrutinize the arguments, by which it is usually supported. It is, however, but just to observe that neither the doctrine, nor the arguments have appeared so satisfactory to the minds of others, as they seem to have done to those by whom they have been alleged. We know nothing of infinity, but *the fact that certain things are infinite*. The *nature* of infinity we do not comprehend at all; nor form a conception of what this phraseology means. It hardly needs to be

observed, that where we have no conceptions, we can form no comparisons; and therefore can make no propositions, the truth of which can be perceived by our minds. Concerning the fact that something is infinite, we may with sufficient care argue, to some extent, successfully. Concerning the nature of infinity, I discern no manner in which such minds as ours can argue at all. But in our discussions concerning infinity, we are prone, insensibly, to blend these two things together; and often are amused with words only, when we suppose ourselves to be employed about ideas. Hence have arisen the perplexity, and the want of satisfaction, which have attended inquiries concerning this subject. I shall, therefore, not insist on these arguments, nor on the conclusion to which they conduct us,"

When we consider the nature of the doctrine of infinite sin, its glaring assumptions, the numerous absurdities it involves, and the disrespect in which it is held by multitudes of the staunchest advocates of endless punishment, who would gladly employ it if they could, I think we may safely conclude that it is entitled to no confidence, and deserves to be universally rejected as a shrewd and audacious device, introduced merely to bolster up the most abominable dogma ever believed or preached on earth,

SEC. 2. *Infinite punishment is but the counterpart of infinite rewards, and is therefore just.*

This hypothesis is adopted by Archbp. Dawes. "It must be considered," he says, "that sin is a voluntary refusal and contempt of eternal happiness, and upon that account richly deserves eternal misery for its punishment, according to that of St. Austin, *That man is well worthy of eternal punishments who hinders himself from being eternally happy.* And indeed, it cannot be denied, that the eternity of the joys of heaven make the belief of the eternity of the torments of hell sit much easier upon our minds than it would otherwise have done. Had the eternity been only on the punishing side, this would have looked hard, and not altogether agreeable to our notions of the divine goodness; but being on the rewarding side likewise, we have here infinite goodness and infinite justice set one against the other; and what reason can any man possibly have to complain of this?"

The design of this modification of the exploded hypothesis of infinite sin, is very frankly confessed by the Archbishop to be to make the doctrine of the eternity of hell-torments *sit more easily on the mind.* A very worthy object, doubtless, but how is it to be effected? Neither the Scriptures nor reason give us any knowledge of *infinite rewards* in the government of God, and this therefore, like infinite punishments, must be assumed

instead of being proved. But let it be taken for granted that the rewards of obedience are infinite, and what, I pray, has this to do with infinite punishments? For as Archbishop Tillotson says, "though it be not contrary to justice to exceed in rewards, that being a matter of mere favor; yet it may be so to exceed in punishments." Justice obviously requires some proportion between the crime and the punishment of it; hence the consideration of rewards, be they greater or less, can not affect the subject at all, unless it be to assist the prejudiced in blinding themselves to the absurdity they are attempting to maintain; for, as Dr. Whisby justly remarks, "it renders not the fault the less finite, or the punishment the less infinite, and so doth not render it the less inconsistent with divine goodness and equity."

Archbishop Dawes thinks the infliction of endless punishment will very clearly express God's indignation at man's refusal of his mercy. "When God has been so abundantly gracious, as out of his own free goodness and loving kindness," says he, "to offer everlasting happiness to mankind, if they will accept it; is it not very reasonable to suppose that he will to the utmost resent their refusal and contempt of the riches of his goodness? Is it not very natural to believe that he will give the contemners of everlasting happiness, everlasting cause to remember, bewail, and repent of this their folly? Doth it not seem very just that he

should everlastingly keep them in being, that so they may to all eternity think on that everlasting happiness which they have refused, and that by making them feel what an eternity of woe is, they may be sensible to the utmost what they have lost in losing an eternity of happiness" ?

I should regret to think it necessary to say a single word in reply to such an argument as this. If it does not represent the Deity with the low passions of a narrow minded man ; if it does not exhibit him as changing his dispositions from "free goodness and loving kindness," to malignity and implacable revenge, I have entirely failed to understand it. I will therefore leave it for some advocate of endless torments to explain if he can, how keeping sinners everlastingly in being, "so that they may to all eternity think on that everlasting happiness which they have refused, and feel what an eternity of woe is," consists with either goodness or justice. Such a doctrine I cannot but regard as a gross libel on the divine character.

The pious Christopher Love argues on much the same ground as the Archbishop above. "The godly," he says, "shall be in everlasting joy, therefore the wicked shall suffer eternal torments ; their condition shall be quite contrary to one another ; the torments of the one shall last as long as the joys of the other ; as the one is for the glory of God's grace, so the other is for the glory of his

justice." It was Swedenborg, I believe, who maintains that there must be evil as well as good, a Devil as well as a God. Our author would add another item to these necessities, and have an endless hell, because there is an endless heaven !

SEC. 3. *God has set before the sinner life and death, and given him his choice between them ; he has also expressly forewarned him of the consequences of his conduct ; no one therefore can charge him with injustice.*

Several authors greatly congratulate themselves on this precarious ground. "If God inflict eternal torments on men," says Dr. Burthogge, "it is but what he told them of before that he would do if they did not reform, which was but *fair*. He striketh not, but after he hath threatened."

This, it will be seen, is but little more than another form of the preceding hypothesis in which is assumed the very thing to be proved, and then by a slight of hand, this assumption is made a premise for proving itself. We alledge that endless punishment is unjust, and therefore it can not be threatened ; our opposers assume that it is threatened, and thence conclude that it is just, and thence again that if just it must be threatened. What is this but arguing in a circle ?

But let us concede that endless punishment is threatened ; and will that prove it *just* ? Some years ago men in England were threatened with capital punishment for petit larceny, and the

threatening was often carried into execution. Was this *just*? True, they were forewarned; they were *told before*, as Dr. Burthogge has it, "*which was fair.*" Very fair, no doubt, but I ask again, was it *just*? So in the case before us. The sinner, it may be said, has nothing to complain of; God "*strikerh not but till after he hath threatened.*" This, perhaps, may be enough to silence, in some degree, the sinner, but as Archbishop Tillotson well says, "*after all that, it does not seem so clearly to satisfy the objection, from the disproportion between the fault and the punishment.*"—There still stands that glaring injustice of an infinite punishment for a finite crime; and there is no sophistry, no cloaking over that can lessen the absurdity it involves.

Besides, it might be worth the attention of men, were they not resolved on supporting a theory, to consider whether all men have been duly threatened with endless punishment. What shall we say of the heathen, twenty millions of whom, according to modern orthodoxy, are sinking into hell every year, and more than fifty thousand every twenty four hours? What shall we say infants and children who are incapable of understanding such threatening, but are still exposed to "all miseries, spiritual, temporal and eternal?"

SEC. 4. *The damned will have ended their probation before they are sentenced to Hell ; and as they enter the future world sinners, they must be miserable forever, for then there will be neither opportunity nor motives for repentance and reformation.*

This is obviously but another form of the old hypothesis of infinite sin. It rests ultimately on that assumption, but introduces at the same time another which is equally absurd. It is a constant doctrine of the so called evangelical churches, that that there is no change after death ; as a man dies, as to moral character, so he will remain forever, Dr. Pond tells us that " we learn from the Bible that this life was intended to be a state, not of retribution, but of probation and trial. . . . Men are on probation for eternity. It is for their characters while on probation that they will be rewarded or punished beyond the grave. This being the case, the grand design of probation seems to be to furnish those who are placed upon it such an opportunity for the formation and development of moral character as will prepare them to stand in judgment, and to meet its everlasting awards."

According to this hypothesis the present world is a state of probation merely, and the future of unmingled retribution ; here men *act*, and there the wicked are *punished* for the actions here performed. It follows as a necessary consequence of this theory, that there will be no moral action in the world to come. And this is acknowledg-

ed, at least so far as the wicked are concerned.—“The alteration of their condition and their state,” says Dr. Whitby, “seems to exclude all place for reformation and for the exercise of piety and virtue. For the sentence of condemnation and exclusion from God’s blissful presence, being passed upon them, they have no hope of being happy, or escaping the misery to which they are exposed ; and so can have no motive to be better, nor can be in a capacity to love that God from whom they expect no good. There also seems to be no place for virtue in a future state.”

This is very frank, and on the popular doctrine of probation, very true. But it is unfortunately suicidal. Because nothing can be more certain than that he who is incapable of virtue, is also incapable of sin. Because the power of doing ill in moral creatures, is inseparable from that of doing well. If, then, you deny to the damned the ability to repent, reform and be virtuous, you deny them, at the same time, the very power which renders them amenable to law, and the proper subjects of punishment. The insane and the idiotic may suffer, but they can not be *punished* ; because punishment implies not mere suffering, but suffering in connexion with the consciousness of guilt, and as a recognized consequence of it. The damned in hell either retain their moral natures, i. e. their moral power and freedom, or they do not. If they do, then they can reform ; if they do not, then to

punish them is not only impossible, but to torture them throughout eternity, would be the mast e piece of all imaginable cruelty. I willingly leave the advocates of endless torments to take which horn of the dilemma they please. The German divines are wiser than to assume the ground generally taken by English and American theologians. "Our ideas of the justice and goodness of God do not permit us," says Dr. Knapp, "to suppose that he will punish any one as an offender, from whom he himself has withdrawn all opportunity for repentance and all freedom of action."

But without prosecuting this subject farther, it is enough to repeat, that this hypothesis is, at bottom, identical with that of the infinity of sin, and must stand or fall with it. It is the finite sins of a short life that are to be punished with infinite and endless torments. And to show the beauty of this favorite hypothesis, the hardened sinner of three score years and ten, after a life of debauchery and crime, with his hands all red with the heart's blood of his best friend, repents and believes, upon the very scaffold, and goes immediately to heaven; while the innocent and amiable youth with one sinful purpose in his young heart unrepented of, dies without true christian faith, and is consigned to hell torments forever! Two human beings are born the same hour; one of af

fluent, respectable and religious parents, who lead him in the way of virtue, and finally by the influences of education, intellectual and christian, bring him to the full participation of the gospel, and thus fit him for heaven ; the other comes into the world in a den of infamy, a sink of corruption, grows up ignorant, amidst the most depraving examples, in poverty, and under constant temptations and sufferings. At the age of twenty one, they both die, as they were born, in the same hour. The child of fortune, having finished his probation, is taken to heaven ; the child of vice, whose lot has been so untoward in this world, finishes his also and sinks into hell forever ! And this is justice !—the justice of God !

SEC. 5. *The punishment of the damned will be the natural and necessary consequences of their past conduct, and all such consequences are endless.*

This is still another metamorphosis of the old doctrine of infinite sin, and one which is supposed by its friends, to relieve the government of God very greatly, and make the dogma of endless punishment sit quite easily upon the mind.

“ These punishments,” says Rev. Matthew Horberry, “ are not merely arbitrary, or so to be understood, as if God interposed every moment to inflict them by acts of mere power or will, but they are the natural and necessary consequences and results of things . . . They will not so properly be *executed* by the particular interposition of

•

any being whatever, as come to pass of course, necessarily, and in the very nature of things."— So speaks Dr. Whitby. "The sinner," says he, "becomes miserable forever, not by any positive act of God inflicting everlasting stripes upon him, or loading him perpetually with fresh torments, but wholly from his own sin."

This hypothesis quite dispenses with the service of the Devil, who, on the popular theory, is God's chief minister in tormenting the damned, though Dr. Goodwin maintains that the Deity himself performs the whole work with his own hand. But does it altogether relieve the character of God from the charge of cruelty? If it was impossible for him to create such beings as men without exposing them to endless torments, there certainly was no necessity for creating them at all; and as Archbishop King suggests, "it is hardly agreeable to goodness to have placed any being in that state which was obnoxious to such excessive misery."

But granting that every moral action has certain natural and necessary consequences of either good or evil, what proof, I beg leave to ask, have we that those consequences are endless? Must this, like every other premise employed to support the doctrine of endless punishment, be assumed? Besides, if this assumption be true, it will lead us into some difficulties, which I fear those who employ this argument have not duly

considered. If every wrong action be followed to all eternity by consequences of evil to him who performed it, we must conclude that no man will ever be altogether happy, for all men have sinned. And David and Paul, and many others who are regarded as saints, must be miserable forever.—There is no good man without some evil, and craving the pardon of my orthodox neighbors, there is no evil man without some good. Of course there will be neither heaven nor hell, neither perfect happiness nor misery in the future world. But what shall become of infants who have done neither good nor evil? According to this hypothesis they will be neither happy nor miserable, and might as well not be at all.

But do not the favorers of this hypothesis perceive that it overlooks entirely the great fact of revelation—the fact that the gospel is a *remedial system*, introduced on purpose “to destroy the Devil and his works,” i. e. *to take away the sin of the world*? If the gospel is true, “where sin abounded grace did much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.” Christ will *draw all men unto himself*.

But perhaps it may be said as Dr. Knapp has done, that “those who have sinned, will always stand proportionably below others in point of happiness.” According to this, Peter, and Paul

must always stand below James and John, and the judgment of the Savior, that *he to whom much has been forgiven loves much*, must be reversed. It can not be shown, then, that the consequences of actions are endless, and especially the consequences of evil actions which goodness can overcome, and which we see even in this world, often made subservient to good purposes, to happiness. But beyond this, the hypothesis is utterly opposed to the whole design of christianity, and stands in no harmony with even the other errors and absurdities of mis-called orthodoxy.

SEC. 6. *Those who are damned are incurably wicked and incorrigible; therefore they must be punished world without end.*

Another form still of the old hypothesis of infinite sin. For if sin be not infinite or capable of becoming so under certain circumstances, how happens it that any should become incurably wicked, and incorrigible? But here in this new form we are thrown once more upon sheer assumption; the assumption that some men have become, or will become, so bad that they cannot be reformed. Dr. Burthogge is good enough, however, to confine damnation to such exclusively. "That infernal torments are not inflicted, but on the obstinate and irreclaimable, can not but be manifest," says he, "to all that soberly consider, that the divine heart, as well as divine arms, are ever open to the penitent and converting." So all the modern

German divines, who admit the eternity of punishments, predicate it solely of those who have sinned against the Holy Ghost, and lost the very capacity of virtue and happiness. "He who can love," says Dr. Oldshausen, "may also become the recipient of love ; yea, as love is felicity and eternal life, so the privation of love is to be considered as infelicity and incapacity for happiness."

The question, then, and the only question to decide is, whether there be such persons, or whether it be possible for a human being to become incorrigible, irreclaimable and deprived of the very capacity of loving. All this the hypothesis before us boldly assumes, not only without proof, but against all the proof furnished by experience and observation. Experience and observation demonstrate that there is no point in the progress of the sinner at which we can take our stand and assert that here he becomes incorrigible. History is full of instances of the reformation of men of the most desperate characters. Paul was once a bloody persecutor ; Augustine a corrupt and licentious infidel ; and how many do we see around us now, upright, religious and valuable citizens, who a few years ago were grossly intemperate and profane. But the New Testament is decisive on this point. "Christ came into the world to save sinners"—"to seek and to save that which was lost." Hence he "gave himself

a ransom for all, to be testified in due time ;” and he assures us that he will draw all men unto himself. So Paul teaches that “Christ must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet . . . And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto Him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.” Besides it is very worthy of consideration whether such a state as the advocates of this hypothesis assume, would not exclude man’s moral nature. I confess I can no more conceive of a *man* being absolutely incorrigible and irreclaimable ; absolutely incapable of virtue and happiness ; than I can conceive of a sun destitute of light, or of fire without heat. It is this moral nature which renders him man, and distinguishes him from all other beings, and to suppose him deprived of it, is to imagine him converted into some other being, and one, let it be remembered, incapable of punishment.

SEC. 7. *If the wicked were to live forever in the present world, God foresees that they would continue to sin forever, and therefore it is but just to inflict upon them an endless punishment.*

Algerus was sorely troubled to determine how the rewards and punishments of temporal actions could be eternal. “It seemeth,” says he, “to be not only an intemperate rigor, that for the fault of one short day, or even for a little hour, an eternity of punishment should be required and inflicted,

but also a kind of prodigality, that the rewards of a temporal action should be made to endure forever." To solve the difficulty growing out of this utter disproportion between the cause and its consequences, he attempts to make it appear that although the action is only temporal, the disposition or will, whether for good or evil, is eternal. Hence he maintains that such rewards and punishments are just, "because God," says he, "does not reward or punish the temporal action, but the disposition or will, which is eternal, and which if it were to live forever, would continue forever in the same state. Therefore," says he, "God justly attaches an eternity of retribution to the eternity of will."

Archbishop Dawes favors, though not strongly, the same views. "It is further urged," says he, "that sinners, though not actually, yet in will and intention, do sin eternally, and therefore in all justice ought to suffer eternal punishment. For though, because God allows sinners but a temporal life in this state of probation, they have it not in their power to sin actually to all eternity, yet this is no thank to them, who in all probability, were they to live here eternally, would eternally go on in their sins."

This is the famous argument, as it is called, *ex scientia media Dei*, i. e. from God's knowledge of things conditional. It was employed by Ful-

gentius, Gregory the Great, and in later times by Drexelius, Baumgarten, Troschel, and others.

To this desperate hypothesis it hardly seems necessary for me to reply. It stands upon a groundless assumption, and involves the grossest injustice. It assumes, what no man can prove, if he can even think it possible, that some men, if they were to live in this world forever, would also continue for ever to sin. But, as Archbp. Tillotson says, "who can certainly tell that if a man lived never so long, he would never repent and grow better?" For as Dr. Knapp justly remarks, "the fact is very questionable, whether there are any men who would go on to sin without interruption, in every possible situation and under all circumstances in which they might be placed in this world." That they would is a sheer assumption, with a thousand probabilities against it, and nothing but a bare possibility in its favor. But granting this assumption, do not the friends of this hypothesis perceive that it pointedly convicts God of injustice? It represents him as punishing his creatures with endless torments, not for what they have done, but for what he foresaw they might have done, had they lived in this world, and under its present circumstances, through all eternity! We ordinarily think it just when a man is adequately punished for the crimes he has committed, without his suffering for what he might have committed, had he enjoyed time, opportu-

mity and means. We can conceive of no greater injustice than is here ascribed to God. As Dr. Knapp says, "it cannot be reconciled with our ideas of justice, that sins which were never actually committed, should be punished as if they had been committed," and he concludes that were a human ruler to act on this principle, "it would doubtless be pronounced unjust and tyrannical."

It is unnecessary for me to say how severely the advocates of endless punishment must have felt themselves pushed, before they could resort to so desperate a hypothesis as this. All fair minds, it seems to me, must be forced to say with Archbp. Tillotson, that it "hath neither truth nor reason enough in it, to give satisfaction." It is a mere device to impose upon the credulous and unreflecting. But there are few or none at present, I believe, who adopt it, and it may therefore be regarded as an exploded hypothesis.

SEC. 8. *Endless punishment will be inflicted to vindicate the divine honor, and is purely vindictive.*

"They who do not reform and convert," says Dr. Burthogge, "upon the *threatening* of eternal punishment, when God makes it, do, by interpretation, laugh at *that*, and dare him; it is as if they should say, we care not for his threats, nor fear them; let him that makes them do his worst. And what shall God, in *honor*, then do, when he is challenged to do his worst, but the justice which

he owes himself, to make them feel the dire effects of his extreme displeasure, who so despised him?" Hence this learned author frankly acknowledges that "eternal punishments are neither castigations, nor examples, but mere revenges, intended to assert divine honor, and satisfy justice, and, in a word, intended to remove away from God all the dishonor and contempt that hath been put upon him by sinners. . . And to be plain, I hold eternal punishments now threatened, and one day to be inflicted on those that dispise them, all *vindictive*, or *effects of wrath*; and that the great design and end of God in them is to rescue his injured honor, and to satisfy and please himself in the trophies of his justice, and in triumphs over vanquished enemies." In like manner does Dr. Goodwin speak. "Sin in thee," says he, "and the injury of it to God, is an eternal stain, which hell-fire cannot eat out or satisfy God for, but in an eternity of time. . . . Justice hath a mixture of pity mingled with it, but when 'tis a case of revenge, there is decorum put upon the extremity of justice. It is the revenge of an injury. . . . Then says justice, too, I must be satisfied to the utmost farthing, and have the last drop of blood that is in their souls"! Even mercy itself, according to our learned Doctor, will not speak a good word for the damned, but "turn as fiercely against them as any other attribute."

Even Leonard Woods, Jr., the translator of

Knapp's Theology, adopts much the same views, though expressed in less intelligible terms. God's love of what is morally good, he says, is the *last ground* of the divine justice, and the *last end* of the retribution which he awards. "If there were no reformation of the individual offender, no warning of others, or any objective ground for the exercise of retributive justice, there would be sufficient ground for all that God does, either to punish or reward, in his own absolute love of moral good and hatred of moral evil."

Leibnitz speaks of a kind of justice which contemplates neither the amendment of the guilty, nor an example for others, nor the reparation of evil, but which is founded in the fitness of things, that requires a certain satisfaction to expiate a bad action, and which, he says, not only satisfies the injured party, but the wise, also, who behold it; just as fine music, or a good piece of architecture pleases the well cultivated mind.

The views of Burthogge and Goodwin, and many others, seem to me revolting. To represent God as punishing his creatures without end, and merely from a spirit of revenge, without any design of benefitting either the punished or others, is to make him a monster at once. Nor does it avail to say that he seeks to vindicate his injured honor. How the endless torments of the damned can *honor* God, or reflect any credit upon his government, I leave to the advocates of this

hypothesis to show. Mere revenge is not usually regarded as a very honorable feeling, and if perpetuated forever would disgrace a savage, I had almost said "the arch-fiend" himself.

The views of Leibnitz are, to some extent, undoubtedly correct. The sense of justice belongs to all moral beings, and the infliction of punishment in due measure, meets with an inward response and approval in every good mind. But that this sense of justice contemplates no good in the punishment of the wicked, either to the punished themselves, or any one else, is obviously absurd. There is ever an acknowledged tendency in punishment to prevent evil and increase the virtue and happiness of mankind, which reconciles us to the suffering it occasions, while it satisfies the demand we all feel for moral retribution. Take away this felt, if not clearly recognized, tendency, and punishment loses at once its benevolent character, and is degraded into mere vengeance, and takes on the aspect of ruthless cruelty, as unworthy of God as it is inconsistent with every moral sentiment of the soul.

The glory and honor of God which true punishment is calculated to vindicate and promote, must not be supposed to be some abstraction quite disconnected from the aggregate of his attributes, and unconcerned in the well-being of his moral creation. When Moses desired to see God's glory, he caused all his *goodness* to pass before him.

And when the apostles had seen the life and heard the words of Jesus of Nazareth, they declared that they had seen "his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." The glory and honor of God, then, must consist in such a manifestation of himself as will be glorious and honorable; such as will secure the love and reverence of his intelligent and moral creatures, and not in mere exhibitions of wrath and revenge. "The glory of God," says Dr. Schmucker, "and the supreme good of his creatures, are inseparably united. In bestowing holiness and happiness on men and angels, his own glory is of course promoted, and in promoting his own glory, he necessarily confers happiness on his creatures."

SEC. 9. *Endless punishment is to be inflicted in the way of example, to deter others from sinning.*

This is, perhaps, the most amusing reason ever offered for the infliction of endless torments. For who is to be benefitted by an example to be kept up at such an infinite expense? To answer this natural question, has sorely puzzled the wisest and subtlest among those who have adopted this hypothesis. On the most popular theory, it can have no influence upon either the saints in heaven or the damned in hell; for unfortunately, this mighty example, which, according to Bellarmine, would convert the worst sinner in five minutes, could he only behold it, is most carefully hid

from mortal eyes, and is disclosed to them not till they have ended their probation and entered upon the awards of eternity! Some, however, have imagined that the torments of the damned might have a most happy effect upon both saints and angels in heaven, urging them "to use all possible care to keep their glorious stations, and to take heed of falling from their mansions of bliss." Of this opinion was Archbishop Dawes, who believed that not "many motives will be more prevalent for this purpose, than the eternal sight and contemplation of those torments, which all sinners, as well angels as men, are everlastingly doomed to." Dr. Edwards tells us that this "eternal sight and contemplation" of hell torments will also very greatly increase the happiness of the saints! Dr. Dodwell is disposed to give this *example* a very wide range and influence. "Are those of the human kind the only rational, intelligent, dependent beings," asks he, "whose welfare depends on their obedience? . . . May there not in the boundless extent of the universe be many other beings, dependent likewise, whom being not immediately concerned with, we are therefore not acquainted with? May not the endless punishment of wicked men be a lasting admonition to these to pursue their obedience, and serve for an example to forewarn them of the consequences of wilful and impenitent neglect?" The Rev. Richard Venn adopts the same opinion,

and thinks that "as the angels which kept not their first estate, *are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness*, to deter us from being guilty of the like crimes, so may impenitent men, also, be set forth as a standing example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire, to warn all other beings that either then *are*, or hereafter *may* be created, how dreadful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God."

I do not conceive it necessary to offer a single word in refutation of this bald hypothesis. If christians can reconcile to their understandings and consciences such a doctrine as that of endless punishment, on the bare supposition that there *may* be, *somewhere* in God's universe, beings of *some* order or other, who *may* possibly be made better by the example of the torments of the damned, which they *may* perhaps see, or in some way become acquainted with, I confess I cannot persuade myself to enter the lists with them, and waste my time in endeavors to divert them from so ridiculous a fancy. It shows, however, to what desperate shifts the advocates of this terrible doctrine are driven, when, to give it the color of plausibility, or even to relieve it in the slightest degree from its intrinsic absurdity, they are forced to imagine the benefit of beings, of whose very existence they are most profoundly ignorant, and who, if they exist, may, for aught men can know, be wholly removed from the necessity of such a

fearful example, or as far beyond the reach of its influence as men themselves. Reinhard justly replies to this hypothesis, that "it supposes a mere possibility, which can by no means be proved; nor is it to be maintained that the deterring of others is the true object in punishment; but it is undeniable that the chief end must be the reformation of the punished." And Dr. Knapp lays it down as a principle, that "just at that point where punishment ceases to be salutary to the person who endures it, however salutary it may be to others as an example; just at that point does it become an evidence of the ignorance and imperfection of those by whom it is inflicted. But how can we suppose that God, who knows what kinds of punishment are necessary for the benefit of the offender, and who has every mode of punishment at command, would ever punish any one more severely than was necessary for his own benefit, merely for the sake of making him a terrible example to others?"

Incidental, or closely allied with this hypothesis is the assumption that endless punishment will be inflicted for the general good, the good of the whole, the greatest happiness of the universe, etc. These have been very favorite expressions in this country. In the opinion of those who use this phraseology, endless punishment is not only consistent with the general good, the greatest happiness of the whole, but, what is unfortunate, is

absolutely necessary to its attainment ! Dr. Strong who belonged to this school, defines benevolence to be a regard to the greatest quantity of happiness in society, and not the happiness of every individual The good of the whole, or the greatest happiness of intellectual being, is the object of benevolence The happiness of every individual, and the greatest happiness of the whole, are considerations entirely separate, and the benevolence of God will choose the latter."

According to this metaphysical speculation, the happiness of the individual is nothing, or a matter of very little importance in the sight of God ; for he looks only upon the whole, and consults the greatest good of the universe. But does not this scheme strangely overlook the rather important as well as obvious fact, that the general good, the greatest happiness of the whole, is made up simply of the good, the happiness of *individuals* ? Take away the individuals, and what becomes of the whole ? Take away the happiness of individuals, and where is the greatest happiness of the universe of which men speak so much ?

But aside from all this, I would humbly inquire, *how* the endless punishment of a part of the human race is to contribute to the good of the whole ? How indeed can it be consistent with the general good ? It avails nothing to assume that it will prove so ; that assumption is not allowable. I might assert that the perpetual misery of one

member of every family on earth, would greatly increase the general happiness ; and this, I suppose, is as reasonable as the assumption before us, but would not men be ready to ask for proof ? But Dr. Strong very coolly tells that they "are under no obligations to show the manner in which eternal misery will promote the greatest good." Certainly not ; nor am I under any obligations to believe that it is possible.

SEC. 10. *Endless Punishment is just and proper, according to the analogies of both natural and civil laws.*

This argument of analogy is often insisted upon, in order to render the doctrine of endless punishment less improbable and obnoxious to reason. "In the sickly debauchee, never regaining perfect health," says Bp. Delancey, "and in the victim of the scaffold or the block, never restored to life, may be seen the natural indications of the perpetuity of punishment, of a worm that never dies, of a fire that is unquenched." Dr. Cheever also, in his defence of capital punishment, does not hesitate to acknowledge the analogy which he supposes to exist between the endless torments of hell, and capital punishments here in this world ; and he seems to fear that the abolition of the latter will only prove a precursor of the rejection of the former. But let us examine these analogies.

We have two before us ; one drawn from the

action of natural, and the other from that of civil laws, both of which are untenable. There is, in the first place, obviously no analogy between capital and endless punishments. When a man is executed, he is, so far as human government possesses the power, utterly annihilated. With the death stroke the victim of civil law passes forever beyond its reach. True, he is "never restored to life again;" nor is he subject to another pain, another fear. Capital punishment is to civil governments what total annihilation would be to the divine; but there is no analogy between instantaneous death without torture, and endless life in torment! The former may, in some cases, perhaps be a blessing; the latter must always be an unmitigated curse.

The analogy drawn from the action of natural laws is quite as groundless. The sickly debauchee may "never regain perfect health;" but he will either regain enough of health to make life a blessing, or friendly death will soon close at once his existence and his sufferings. God has in infinite goodness so ordered, that human sufferings can never be protracted beyond certain limits. When you can point me to the individual, whose life has been preserved for long, tedious years, along whose pathway no sunlight has fallen, no goodness been manifested; but who has been preserved in being only to suffer; then, and not before, will you have presented a case ex-

hibiting a faint, infinitesimal analogy to the miseries and horrors of endless punishment.

But says Dr. Burthogge, "If mortal men kill the body temporally in their anger, it is like the immortal God to damn the soul eternally in his." The two actions would probably spring from the same angry and revengeful feelings; and if it is like the immortal God to damn the soul eternally in his anger, it must also be very like God in men to torture and kill one another. The Inquisition was, on this view of the case, a very godly and reverend institution, and many of those who have been the worst of men, have proved themselves the greatest imitators of God that ever lived!

The fact is, the doctrine of endless punishment, if true, stands unsupported by a single analogy in the whole universe. Neither the dealings of God, nor the governments of men, imperfect and erring as they are, furnish a single analogy for it that has any weight or deserves a moment's consideration.

SEC. 11. *Sinners will have contracted such a bias to sin that they will never cease, but continue to sin forever; hence they may be justly punished without end.*

This is the famous argument of Leibnitz against the Demonstration of Soner. "Although we concede, therefore," says he, "that no sin is of itself infinite, yet it may be said that the sins of the damned are infinite in *number*, since they will persevere in sinning through all eternity. Where-

fore if their sins are eternal, it is just that their punishments should be so likewise." This has become rather the fashionable hypothesis. "God may justly punish sin," says Dr. Dwight, "as long as it exists, and it may exist forever. He who sins through this life, may evidently sin through another such period; and another; and another; and another without end." Dr. Beecher says, "We are not punished forever for the sins of this short life. This is a mistake. Man is a free agent, and free agency extends through eternity. . . . If sin exists it must be punished while it exists, and if it exists forever, the punishment must be endless." The Am. Tract Society adopts the same hypothesis.

I need not remark that this involves a total departure from the old hypothesis of infinite sin. Those who adopt it recognize moral freedom as an indestructible element of human nature, and therefore believe that it must exist in the future state as well as in the present. But here again the very premise which needs to be proved is assumed. If men sin forever they must be punished forever. Very true, I reply. Now prove that men will sin forever, and I renounce Universalism at once. But how is this to be done? Either man is a free agent in the future world or he is not. If he is not a free agent, on what principle is he to be punished? If he is, who can say that he will never reform? Dr. Beecher tells us that

"the doctrine of the Bible is, if ye do not repent ye shall all likewise perish; if ye do not repent in this life, ye never shall repent"! But if "free agency extends through eternity," why may not a sinner repent beyond this life? Does not such freedom imply the power of repentance and reformation? If it does not then it means nothing. Dr. Dwight lays it down as a fact that "the Scriptures teach us that sinners who die impenitent, will not cease to sin through eternity," and to prove so important a position, he introduces two passages of Scripture, Rev. xxii. 15, and Eccles. ix. 10, to which the reader may refer. It is enough to say that neither of them has any reference to the subject, and I am only surprised that Dr. Dwight should ever have used them for such a purpose. So far are the Scriptures from favoring this notion that they stand decidedly opposed to it, and teach plainly that Christ must reign till he has subdued all hearts to himself.

But if it were conceded that men would sin forever, do not the advocates of this hypothesis perceive that they deprive themselves of every proof-text of endless punishment in the Bible? If those passages which are used to support this terrible doctrine are legitimately employed, they prove that endless punishment is to be inflicted for the sins of *this* life, not those of *the next*; for deeds *done in the body*, not those to be done in the spiritual state. They say nothing of damning

sinners day by day, for sins which they may daily commit. "Eternal death," says Dr. Burthogge, "is threatened unto men for sin in this life, and the sentence of it is pronounced on the damned for this. *Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire.* And why? "For I was hungered and ye gave me no meat," etc.

This hypothesis, then, plausible as it seems, labors under two fatal objections. It assumes what no mortal can prove or has any reason to believe: viz. that sinners will continue to sin through all eternity. It predicates the doctrine on grounds entirely aside from those on which the proof-texts usually quoted for its support, represent it to rest.

SEC. 12. *Sinners, when convinced of sin, feel that they deserve endless punishment: therefore endless punishment is just.*

"Far the greater share of those who pretend to be disciples of Christ," says Rev. Dr. Parker, "acknowledge that they deserve an endless punishment. These facts can scarcely be accounted for on any other supposition than that such a punishment is really deserved." The learned Dr. who here appeals to the feelings and convictions of men, should have informed us whether these feelings were the fruit of a true inward consciousness of desert, or whether they do not on the contrary flow from mere education. The worshipper of Juggernaut thinks it right and feels it to

be a duty, to throw himself beneath the wheels of the idol car and be crushed to atoms; but would Dr. Parker argue hence that this kind of self-immolation is either right or a duty? Thousands and thousands who are now members of the church, when convinced of sin, were also convinced that they had sinned against the Holy Ghost, and were beyond the reach of mercy; and this feeling was as deep and sincere as that concerning their desert of endless punishment. Yet facts show that they were greatly mistaken. They had not sinned against the Holy Ghost, nor were they beyond the reach of mercy. It was all a horrible delusion produced by the false preaching to which they listened. It is so with respect to the deserts of sin. Let Dr. Parker adduce a single text of Scripture which teaches that endless punishment is the just desert of sin, and I shall bow to it; but let him not insult common sense by assuming that it is just, because men under certain peculiar circumstances, the influence of a false religious education, or the terrible representations of ministers of wrath, acknowledge or feel that they deserve to be damned everlastingly. Poor souls! they do not know what endless punishment is, and can form no conception of it. How then can their feelings or acknowledgements furnish even a presumption in favor of its justice or reality?

SEC. 13. *We do not know, nor can we even conceive why endless punishment is inflicted.*

As I have before remarked, there are some who have attempted no explanation of the doctrine in question, but, as they pretend, receive it on the authority of Scripture alone. Of this class is Archbp. Whately, who very frankly tells us that "if we are to measure the dealings of God by the standard of our own reason, we shall find ourselves at a loss to explain any future punishment at all; for it is certain that the object proposed by *human* punishments is the *prevention of future crimes*, by holding out a terror to transgressors; we punish a man, not because he has offended, but that others may be deterred from offending by his example: now how any such purpose can be answered by the future punishment of the wicked, whether for a time or forever, we can by no means conceive."

Is not this a confession of one of the most learned and thoughtful men of the age that no reason for endless punishment can be assigned? Is it not virtually saying that it is perfectly idle to attempt any *rationale* of it. True, the Archbishop does not say in plain terms that the doctrine of endless punishment is *unreasonable*, but he leaves us to receive it on mere textual proof, or not receive it at all. But does our author suppose that the christian world will long maintain such a tremendous doctrine under circumstances like these?

Banish all the *reasons* assigned for the infliction of endless punishment, and its faith would be universally renounced in a single generation. That they are all futile is certain, and Archbp. Whately is clear sighted enough to see, and honest enough to acknowledge it. But all are not sensible how vain and trifling they are, and so long as they can rest on any one of them, they can half satisfy themselves of the truth of the doctrine in question. The learned Archbishop, then, virtually betrays his cause; for to acknowledge that no reason can be assigned for a great act of divine government, which so nearly concerns us all, is virtually equivalent to a confession that it is unreasonable and unjust.

SEC. 14. *Endless punishment is threatened, in order to deter men from sinning, but God may remit the infliction of it, if it pleases him.*

This is the famous argument of Archbp. Tillotson. He conceded, however, that the measure of penalties is not taken "from any strict proportion betwixt crimes and punishments," but "from the ends and reasons of government, which requires such penalties as may, if possible, secure the observation of the law, and deter men from the breach of it." This is a total surrender of the intrinsic justice of this punishment at once. The Archbp. concludes therefore that God "may beforehand threaten what penalties he thinks fit and necessary," and that "if any thing more terrible

than eternal vengeance could have been threatened to the workers of iniquity it had not been unreasonable, because it would all have been little enough to deter men effectually from sin."

But will so terrible a penalty be *inflicted*? That it is plainly threatened the Archbp. professes to believe, but that it will be inflicted he dares not affirm, nor could he well pretend it, so long as the penalty was designed only to deter from sin, and was altogether disproportionate to the crime. He maintained therefore that God was under no obligations to inflict the threatened penalty "any farther than the reasons and ends of government do require." To remit the penalty would be no injury to the sinner, because in so doing God would be better than his word, of which no one could complain; nor could it be regarded as an impeachment of his veracity, since it is no falsehood not to do what one threatens.

This opinion has been adopted by several divines both in England and on the Continent, as Le Clerc, Godfrey Less, Bahrddt, Busching and others. Such men virtually acknowledge that they cannot reconcile the infliction of endless punishment with the divine justice and benevolence. Tillotson has ever been regarded, both by friends and foes, as favorable to Universalism, or at least to have done the doctrine of endless punishment a great disservice, by thus confessing that it is *indefensible* on any rational grounds.

CONCLUSION.

I have now examined all the more important and popular grounds on which men have attempted to rest the doctrine of Endless Punishment. A few others, of a very trifling character, might be added, but they do not deserve attention. Of the merits of those exhibited I need not speak farther, though I can hardly forego the remark, that they are all obviously the result of an exigency which the advocates of endless punishment feel, if they do not acknowledge. They were invented, not to satisfy the reason and conscience, which the doctrine in question outrages, but merely to soothe them, and make the dogma of endless punishment sit more easily upon the mind. Nothing is more certain than the fact, that the doctrine before us must be believed without any explanation whatsoever; or sin must be shown to be infinite; or, finally, it must be proved that men will continue to sin forever. The first of these is an insult to our common sense; the second is absurd; and the last rationally incredible.

I need not observe that all which the majority of the advocates of endless punishment ever attempt, is, to show that it is not *unjust*; and justice, we know, is, in their conceptions, at an infinite remove from all the amiable attributes of the Deity. The task of proving such a punishment to be consistent with infinite *goodness* is yet to be assumed seriously, and in a manly

spirit. Infinite *benevolence*, and infinite *misery* ! Who shall reconcile them ? Who will soberly attempt it ?

It would be curious to pursue this subject still farther, and show how various have been the modifications introduced, for the purpose of softening down the torments of hell, or lessening the number of those who are to suffer them. Prof. Stuart rejects the notion of a *local* hell ; Dr. Brownlee scouts the doctrine of literal *fire and brimstone*. Dr. Burthogge believes that none will be endlessly damned but such as are absolutely incorrigible, and whom no means could reclaim. Dr. Parker makes hell a mere prison of the universe, with scarcely one in a hundred millions of the human race within its dismal walls ; and Archbp. King soberly doubts whether the condition of the damned in hell may not be preferable to non-existence. Nor do these men, with their respective opinions, stand alone. On the contrary, they may be taken as representatives of large classes, who thus acknowledge their inward abhorrence at the doctrine of endless punishment, as commonly held. But such modifications will not long avail ; the tide of public feeling, the improving sensibilities and sympathies of the human heart, a better exegesis, a deeper love of God, and a more enlightened respect for his honor, will, before another century has passed, sweep the revolting dogma of endless punishment from the creeds, or at least from the hearts, of the American churches forever.

THE END.

1





~~SEP 30 1982~~

